ARTSYNC

The Art Magazine You'll Take To Bed

issue #5

SEAN YSEULT

ROCKSTAR • DESIGNER • WRITER

JERRY LEE WILLIAMS

TRIBUTE TO A GIANT

ROCK CONCERTS SHOULD BE DANGEROUS

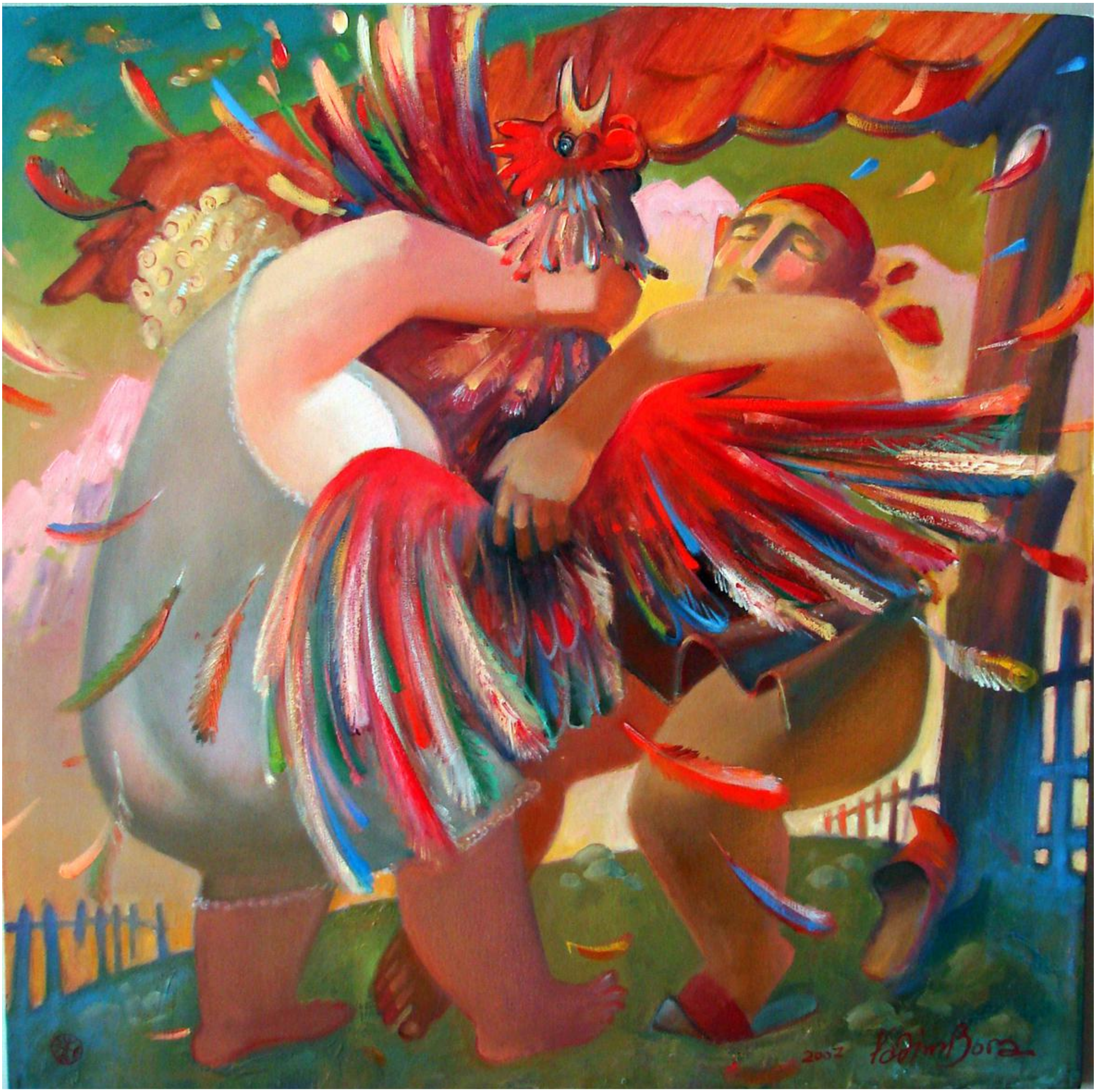
AN INSIDE LOOK AT A GG ALLIN PERFORMANCE

SKOT OLSEN

KING OF THE **SEA**

Vadim Bora

1954—2011


2002
VadimBora

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issue #5

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ArtSync Copies

A hard copy of *ArtSync* Magazine is available and can be ordered online. Please check the "print on demand" link located on the home page of our website: artsyncmag.com. If you prefer the online experience, you can read the magazine through our pager-turner and/or download a copy of the entire magazine off the *ArtSync* website. Downloads for iPads and other digital book readers coming soon.

Next Issue

We are not taking submissions for *ArtSync* issue #6. Our selection process has changed, although we do encourage you to submit for our online gallery. Sometimes we include online submissions with our publication. We do not have a date set for *ArtSync's* next release, but we are very much alive, and not going anywhere. Join our mailing list to stay up to date with release dates and more. The mailing form can be found at the bottom of every page on our website.

Contact Policy

If you have an idea, send it. It might take us a bit to get back with you, but keep bugging us. If we haven't responded within a reasonable amount of time, bug us some more. Having said that, a reasonable amount of time for *ArtSync* humans is like ten days, sometimes more. We just took the mag national, so our hands are full, but our eyes and ears are open. Also, we keep good tabs on our Facebook wall. So there's that too! Disclaimer: unfortunately, we can not promise to respond to all inquires. Especially ones with "urgent" in the subject line. Also, we do not respond to emails that have been marked with "priority" or "importance" flags...ever.

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Thank You

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Inquires

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Dear everyone,

Can't we all just get along? Ha!

The name *ArtSync* pretty much sums up what this publication is all about. We are syncing all the arts whether they're dark, light or misunderstood by the masses, and we believe they're all tied together in one big cluster of emotion, talent and craziness. Yeah, like a freaky art orgy.

I wasn't surprised at all by how nice and together John U. Abrahamson was during our interview. In fact, every correspondence we had leading up to that point had been pleasant. I started to wonder how someone so nice could make the kind of art that John does. I mean, it's a bit more than just over the top. In some cases it's pretty scary. While listening to John describe some of the most traumatizing events in his life, I had to ask myself what kind of person he'd be had he not found a way to unleash his sadness and anger. WHAT and WHERE would ANY artist be without the tools they need to create? Prison? On the run? Even worse, dead inside by the means of self-destruction? Or would they just be everyday people, holding down jobs, caring for their families with no thought of violence or the fear of demons; the ones that depression ultimately gives birth to? What if all the bone-collecting, blood-spattering, so-called dark artists were all very polite and social, and it's the happy sunshine artists that you really have to watch out for? Just kidding, but it's a thought. Really, what if the happy bright painters of the world were just like John, and other artists who create horror in the form of art? Maybe we're not so different on the inside. When I view a scary image painted on canvas, or demons carved into clay, I appreciate the beauty in its release, and know that those feelings I'm witnessing in the form of art are no longer trapped in the artist.

It's funny, because John mentions Bob Ross (*happy tree painting guy*) and shares a few facts about him that some of you may not know. Just saying, looks are deceiving and everyone has a dark room within, we just have different ways of coping. So that brings us back to the top. We may not all get along, but respect for one another is simple and it doesn't require much effort. My point: if you don't have anything nice to say, just zip it! ☺

P.S. I don't normally recommend anything outside of the arts, especially when it comes to politics, religion or environmental issues. To each their own, and that's always been my way of thinking. There are too many sides and arguments to be had with these topics. But recently, I watched two documentaries, *Tapped* and *Food Inc.*, and I have to say both affected me greatly. These films are about two of the biggest issues we face globally, and yes, one person can make a difference.

photo by Rob Alinovi

With the help from my personal savior from fashion disaster, I choose my weapon of choice — the beloved fork. I know, not all of you get it, but if you follow us on facebook.com/artsyncmagazine, you'll catch on fast enough. It's a hoot.

tappedthemovie.com

foodincmovie.com

Yours truly,

CMC

Christine M. Clemmons
Editor-in-Chief

ENJOY

I'M IN THE BAND
WHITE ZOMBIE
Backstage Notes from the Chick in White Zombie
ALL ACCESS
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ADORE yourself
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Lover's Breath.

©

In the home of the Iguanas
On a distant Tropic shore
Amid a gathering of breezes
I can sense romantic lore...

* * *

And I'll meet her along the waters
Where amphibean airplanes land
On the way to celebrations
In a Fertile sun drenched sand.

* * *

And we'll dance Calypso rhythms
To nurture rhythms of our own
Where the scent of sugar cane
and mangoes
Is the Lover's breath of coming
home.

* * *

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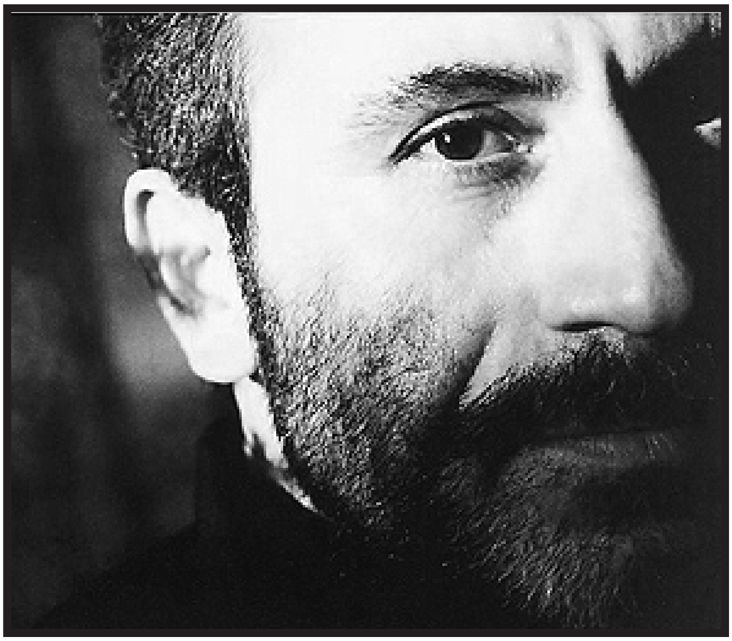
The Visceral Vibrance of Vadim Bora

written by Deanna M. Lehman

A visit into Vadim Bora's bailiwick is a breathless blossom of soul-swooning sweetness beckoning both sunlit serendipity and moonbeam musings in a multitude of artistic mediums. Teeming with talent, this painter and master sculptor displays virile virtuosity in his ability to eloquently express his personal moods and ideas into vibrant visuals utilizing wood, wax, clay, precious metals, oil, canvas, ink and paper.

"People are sometimes confused that an artist can work in so many different mediums," muses Bora. "They think you tend to dabble, rather than concentrate on one thing, or that you can't decide…or that you are just playing. But it's very simple — I use whatever medium that the subject requires. Some of my ideas are best expressed in bronze. Another concept works better as a pen and ink drawing, yet another as a painting. I don't divide my creativity by medium…the materials are just words for my art language." To those who know Bora's creations, it comes as no surprise that the quintessential quality of his work is interwoven with an intense need for artistic freedom of expression.



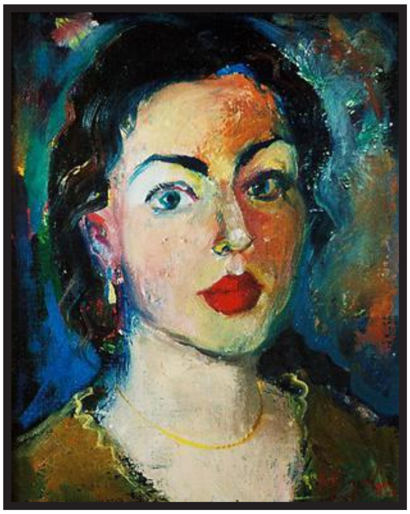
I don't divide my creativity by medium…the words are just words for my art language.
—Vadim Bora, 1954—2011

Bora was born April 9th, 1954 in Beslan, Republic of North Ossetia (Russia), located between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea in the Caucasus Mountains. Beslan was catapulted into the international spotlight September 1st, 2004 by the Beslan school massacre, in which Ingush and Chechen terrorists held 1100 hostage for three days, resulting in the deaths of over three hundred people. Responding to the notoriety of the news, Vadim said, "It is a mixture of sadness and depression but I don't want people to get the idea that the area is just filled with terrorism."

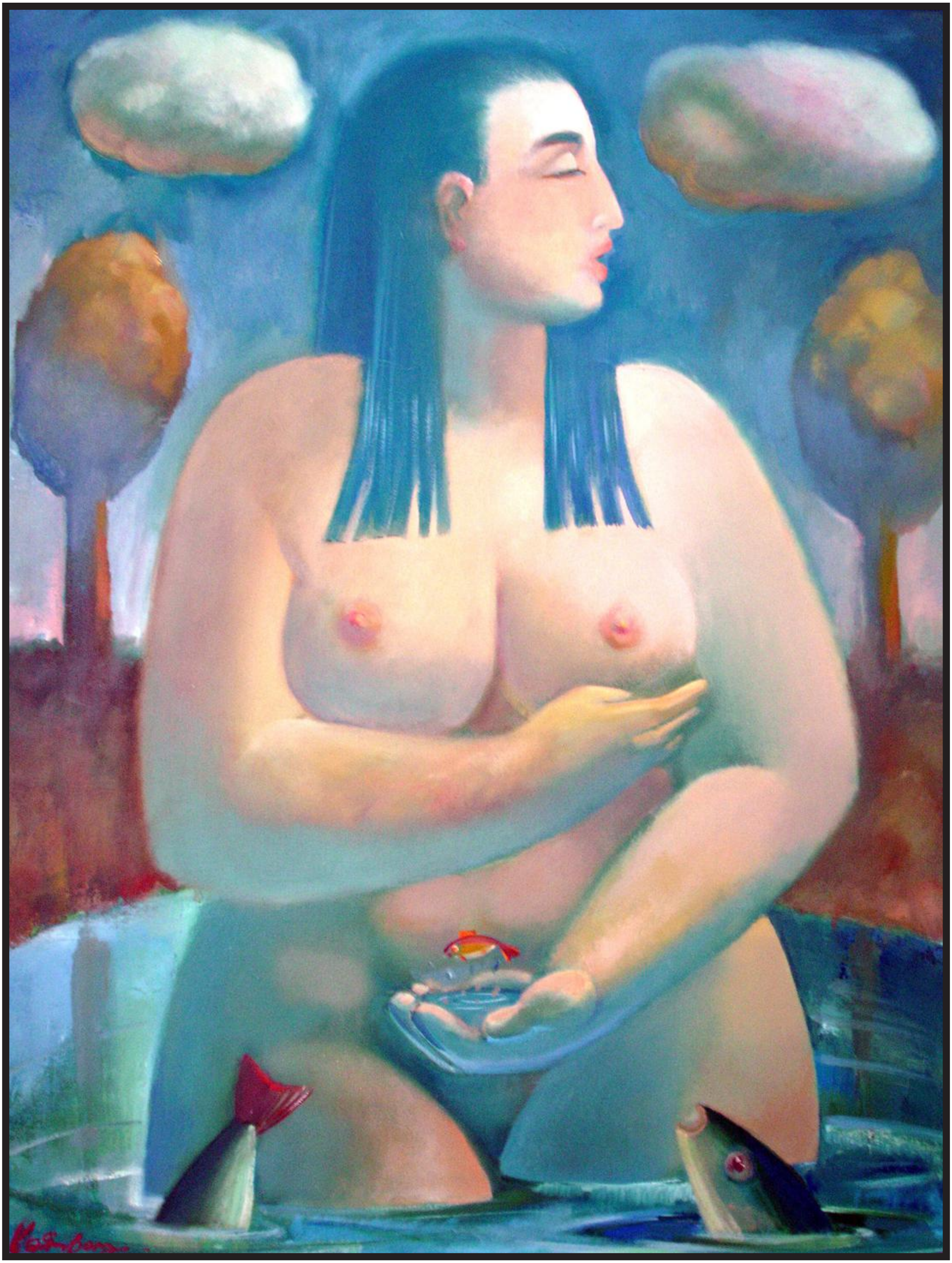
Influenced by the rich cultural heritage of North Ossetia, Bora absorbed folkloric art as he was raised by his school teacher mother and police chief father through the Soviet Union's worst period of stagnation. His deep distaste for being labeled developed during this time, as he witnessed artists being forced to conform to governmental pressures under fear of retribution. Undaunted, Bora found freedom through his art.

He attended the College of Art in Vladikavkaz and finished courses at the St. Petersburg Academy of Art in 1975. There, surrounded by imperial palaces, Bora honed his style ranging from classical to what has been called "exuberant expressionism."

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Bora actualized his lifelong dream to move to the United States. He settled in Asheville, NC with only a barebones ability to communicate in English. The town is sister city to Vladikavkaz, the capital of the artist's republic, where he later moved as a child with his family.



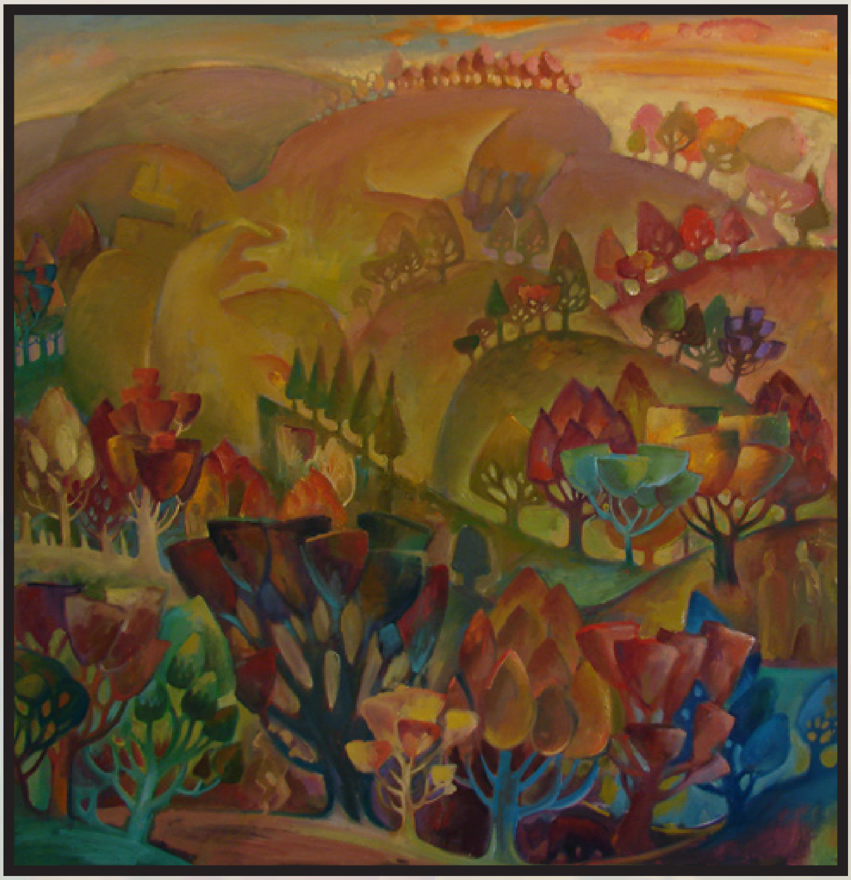
Constance
A portrait of Vadim's wife



Little Fish

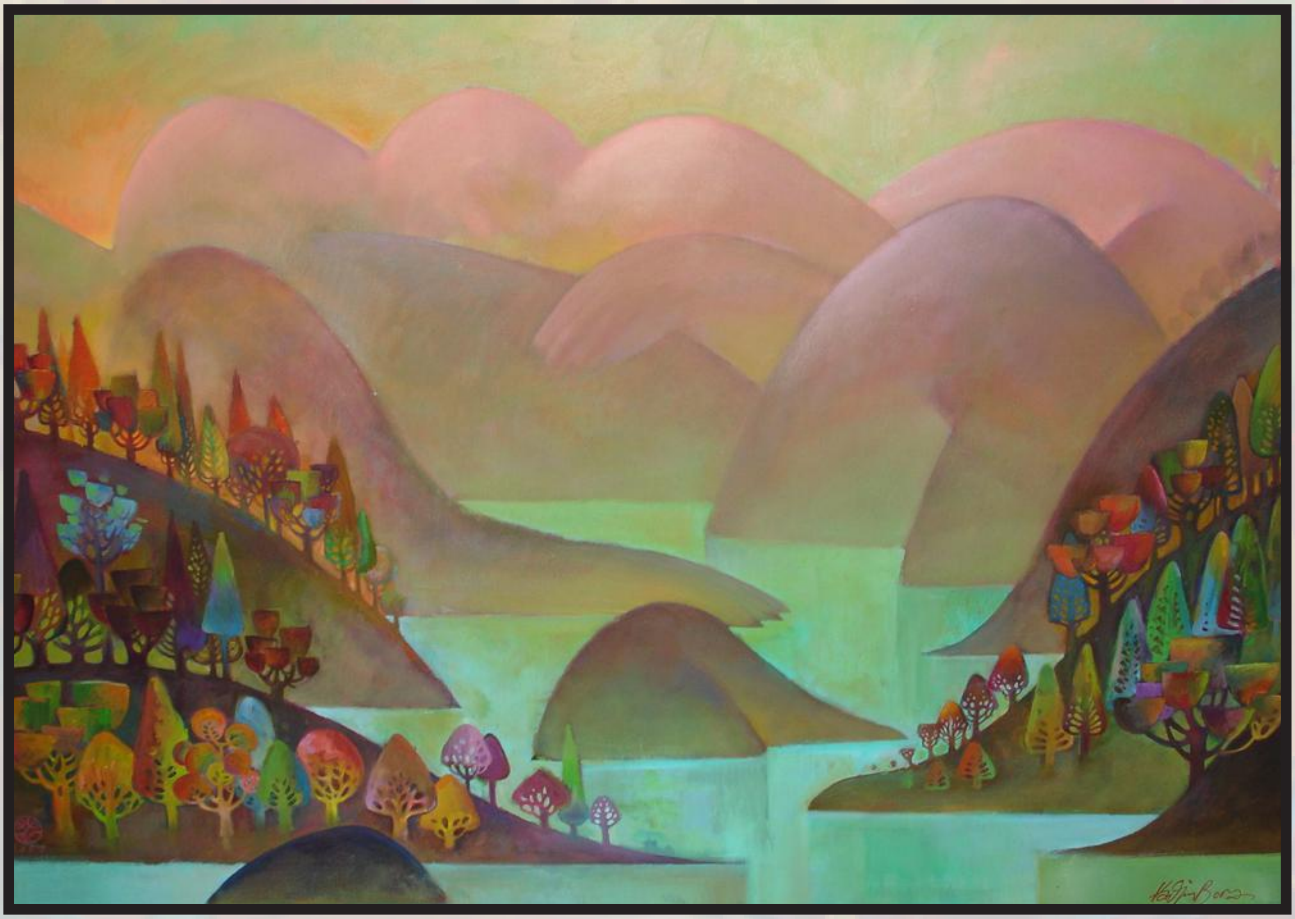
30 x 40 inches, oil on canvas

The Visceral Vibrance of Vadim Bora

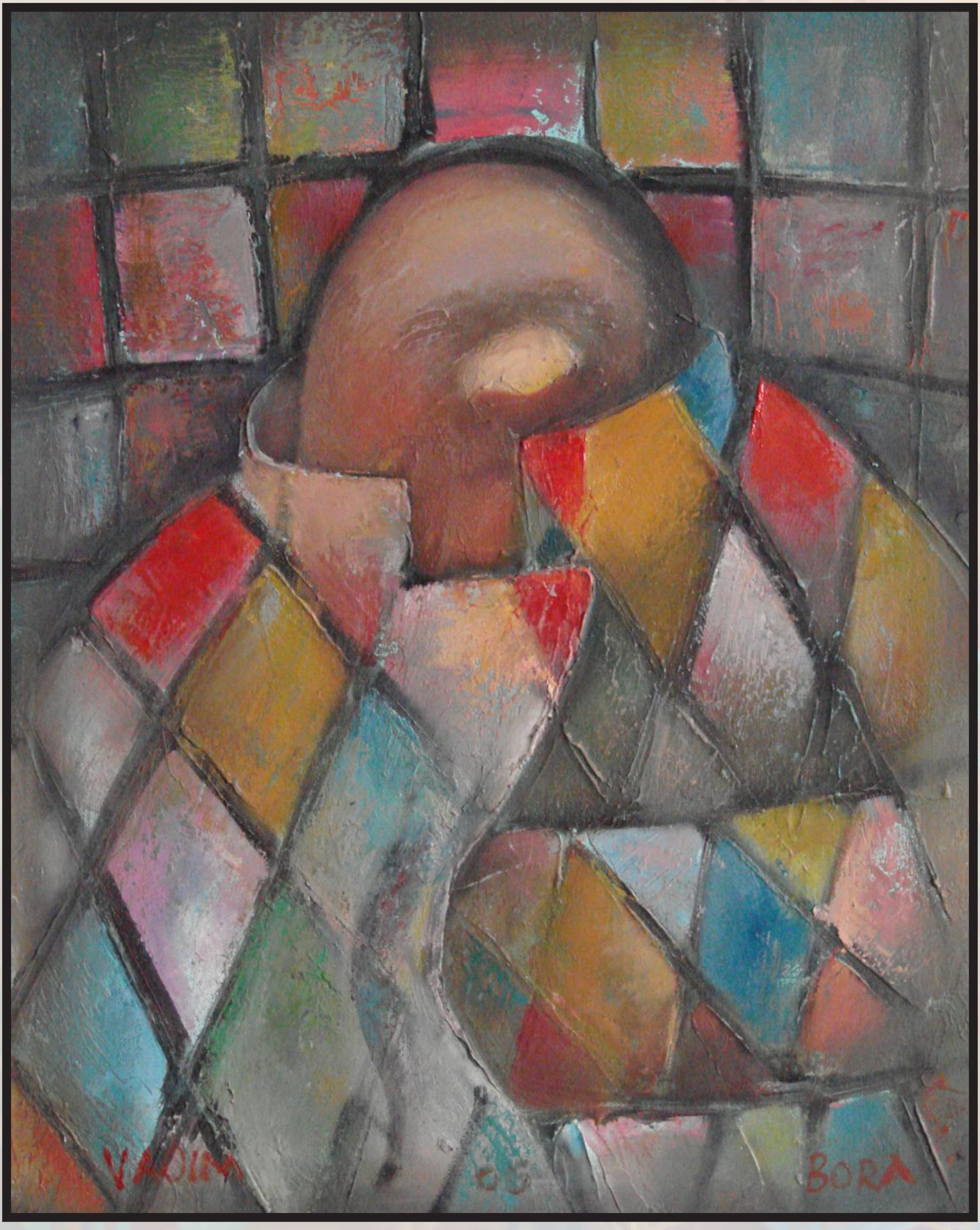


Sweet Dreams, Appalachia
40 x 40 inches, oil on canvas

Vadim sits among his many vibrant pieces. His work holds unexpected lovely surprises for those paying attention.



Sleeping Lake , 36 x 48 inches, oil on canvas vadimbora.com


VADIM
05
BORA

Clown With No Makeup
24 x 20 inches, oil on canvas

There, Bora was encouraged to have an easily identifiable, singular style to fit into the business frameworks of existing galleries. Bora resisted this concept and started a gallery of his own for personal artistic freedom and the ability to represent other local, national and international artists that may not be exposed or appreciated otherwise. In *Rapid River* Magazine, Bora declares, “As an artist — a creator — you are so full of thoughts and things to say, that one idea is pushing another to get out. Why repeat an idea over and over if that idea is already complete? I respect my audience more than that. For a real creator, the sale is not the entire goal. Money is good, but it should be the side-effect of creating. And in my gallery I want to represent creators.”

The world has responded with resounding acceptance. His art is included in the collections of the International Red Cross, Morgan Stanley, the Ministry of Culture Collection in Moscow, BBC and The Financial Times office in London. Other collectors include actress Andie MacDowell and former Kansas Senator Bob Dole. And don’t think Bora neglected to beautify Asheville. His sculptures grace the local walking trail and he has a ten-piece sculpture grouping at Reuters Children’s Outpatient Center. Bora was granted permanent residency by the US Government based on the statute of “Person with Extraordinary Abilities” and consequently attained US Citizenship June 12, 2009. Evidently the people had spoken.

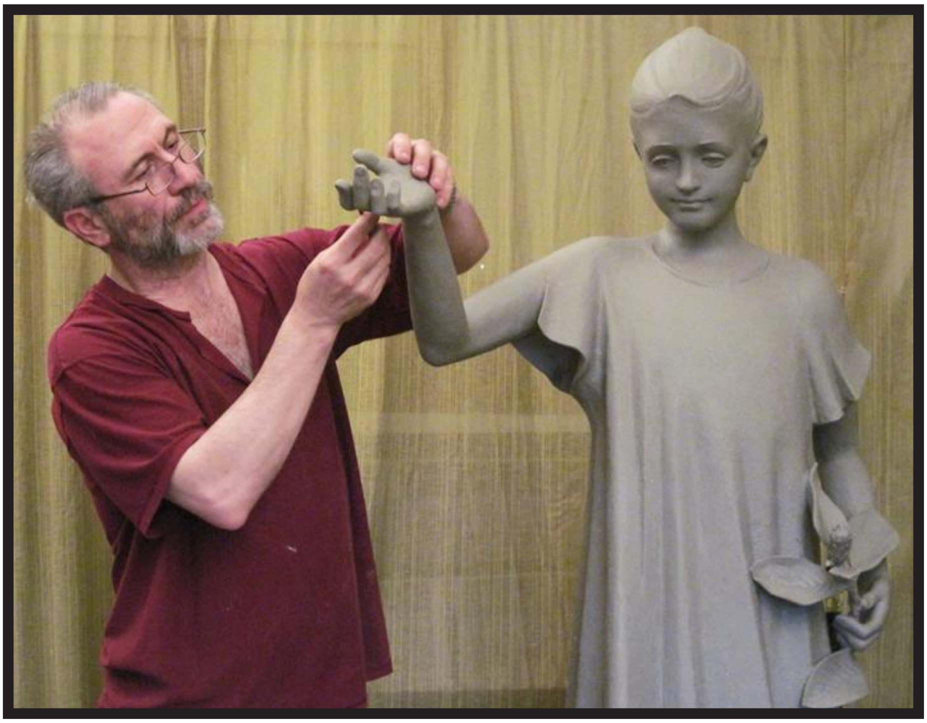
Bora also taught figurative and portrait sculpture at the Fine Arts League of the Carolinas founded by Ben Long. He was commissioned to sculpt a historically accurate portrayal of Cornelia Vanderbilt (daughter of George Vanderbilt) and her beloved St. Bernard, Cedric, using archival photos. The sculpture was unveiled at the Biltmore Estate in Asheville on September 23, 2010. Bora explains, “although the work I create is something that comes from a very deep and private place, I am very pleased that it can speak to others universally. It is very gratifying to an artist for his work to find its proper home.”

People are encouraged to visit Vadim’s website. There, viewers can appreciate the artistic results of combining European techniques and traditions with American ingenuity and dynamics brought together with Bora’s distinctive flair.

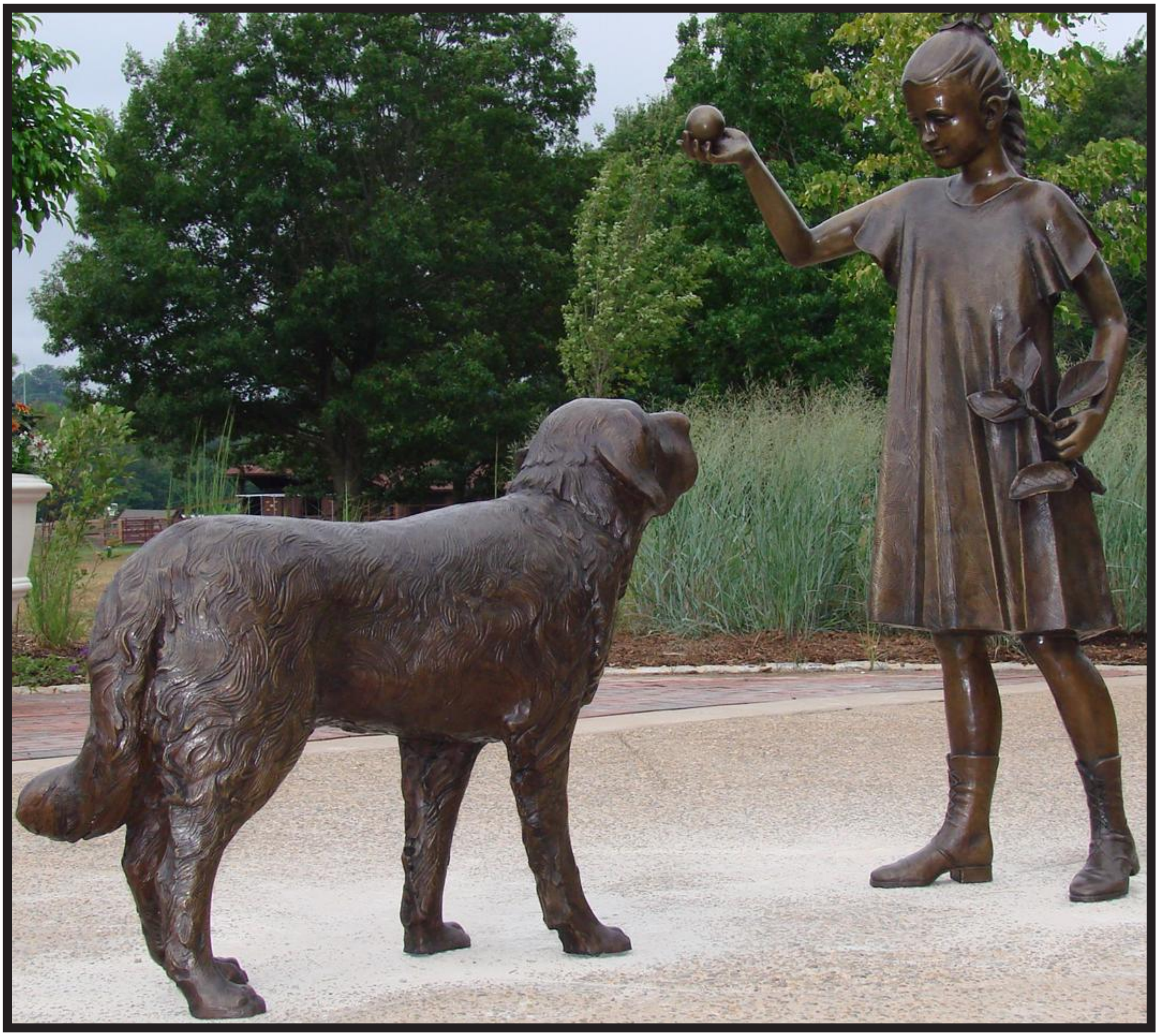
“In the end, life is quite short,” reflects Bora, “What you leave behind is your legacy, and for an artist — that is his soul poured onto canvas, sculpted into clay and stone.”

Above: An example of the detail and care, Vadim put into this beautiful life-sized sculpture.

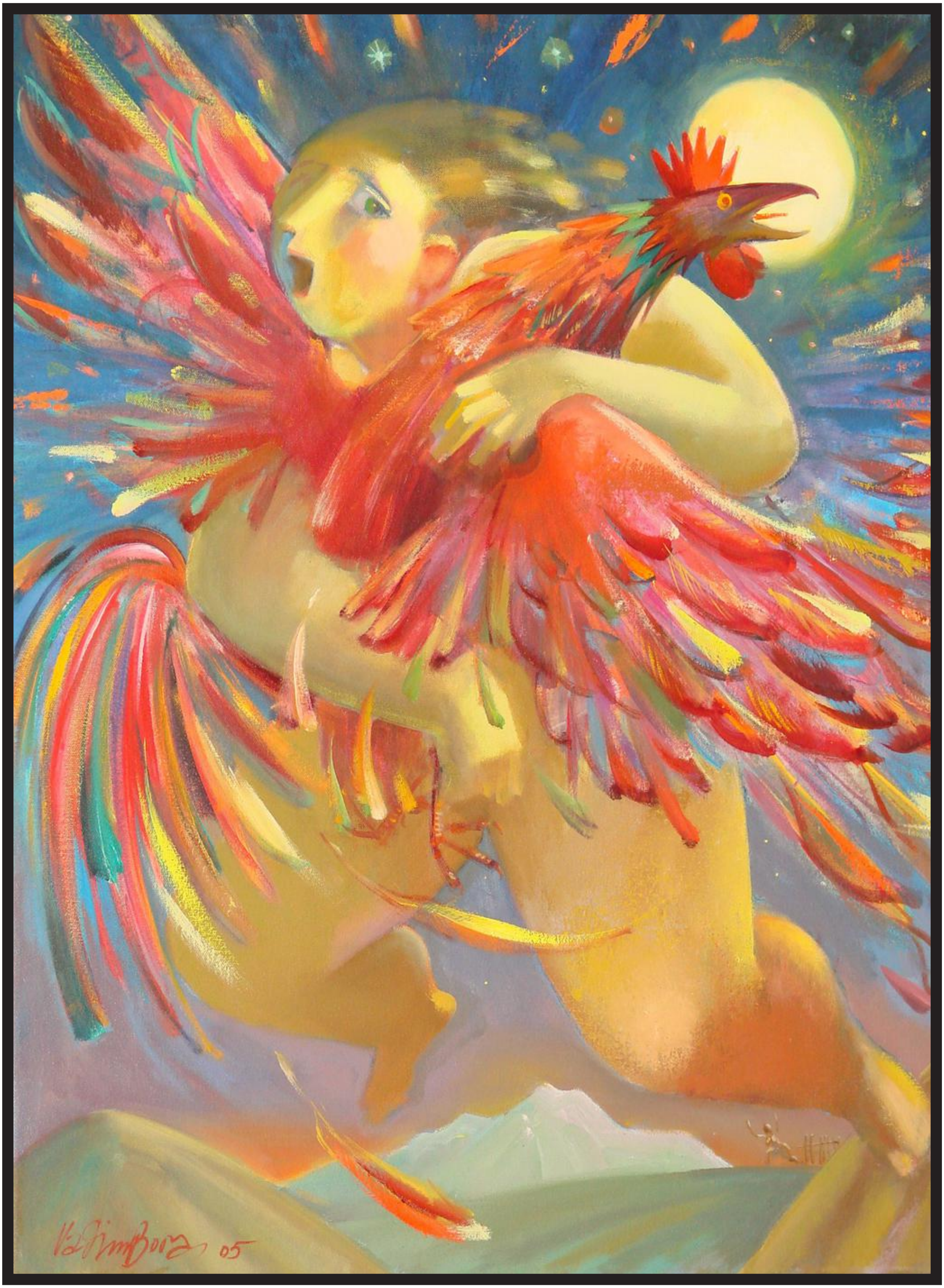
vadimbora.com



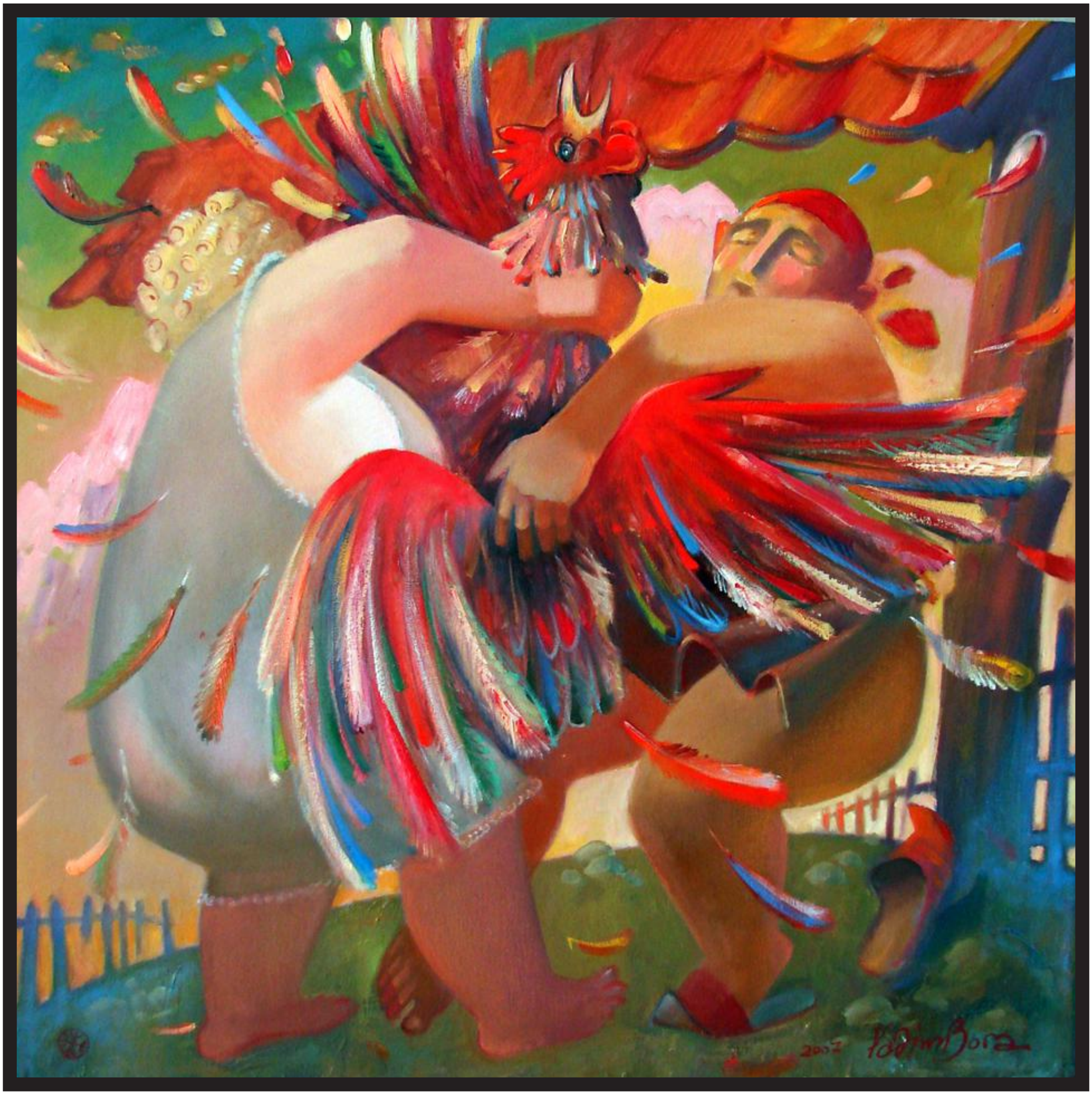
Vadim Bora working on a life-sized sculpture of Cornelia Vanderbilt.



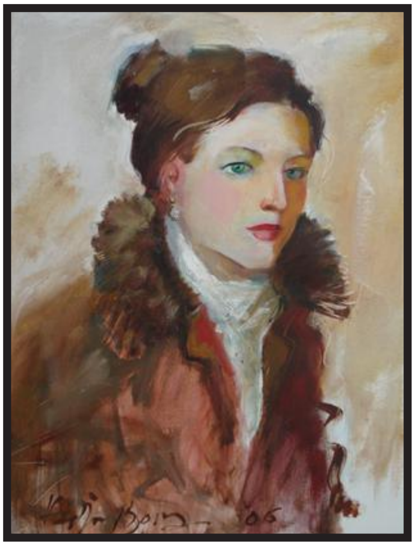
above: Finished life-sized sculpture of Cornelia Vanderbilt
Biltmore Estate, Asheville, N.C.
left: Vadim with wife, Constance.
right: Vadim poses with Alexandra Mahoney
Alexandra was the figure model for Cornelia.



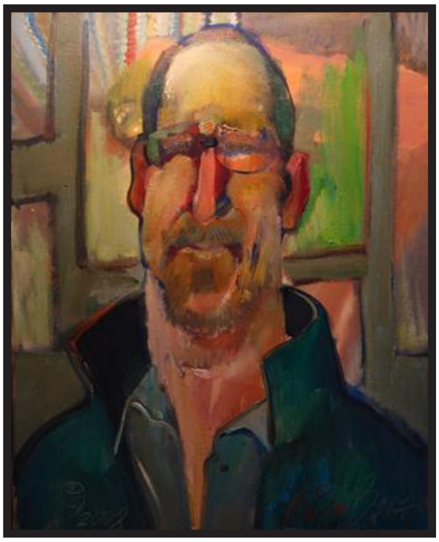
Stealing the Rooster
40 x 30 inches, oil on canvas



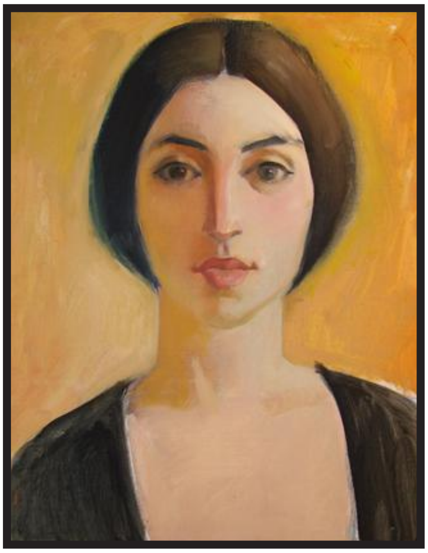
Whose Rooster
40 x 40 inches, oil on canvas



Elena

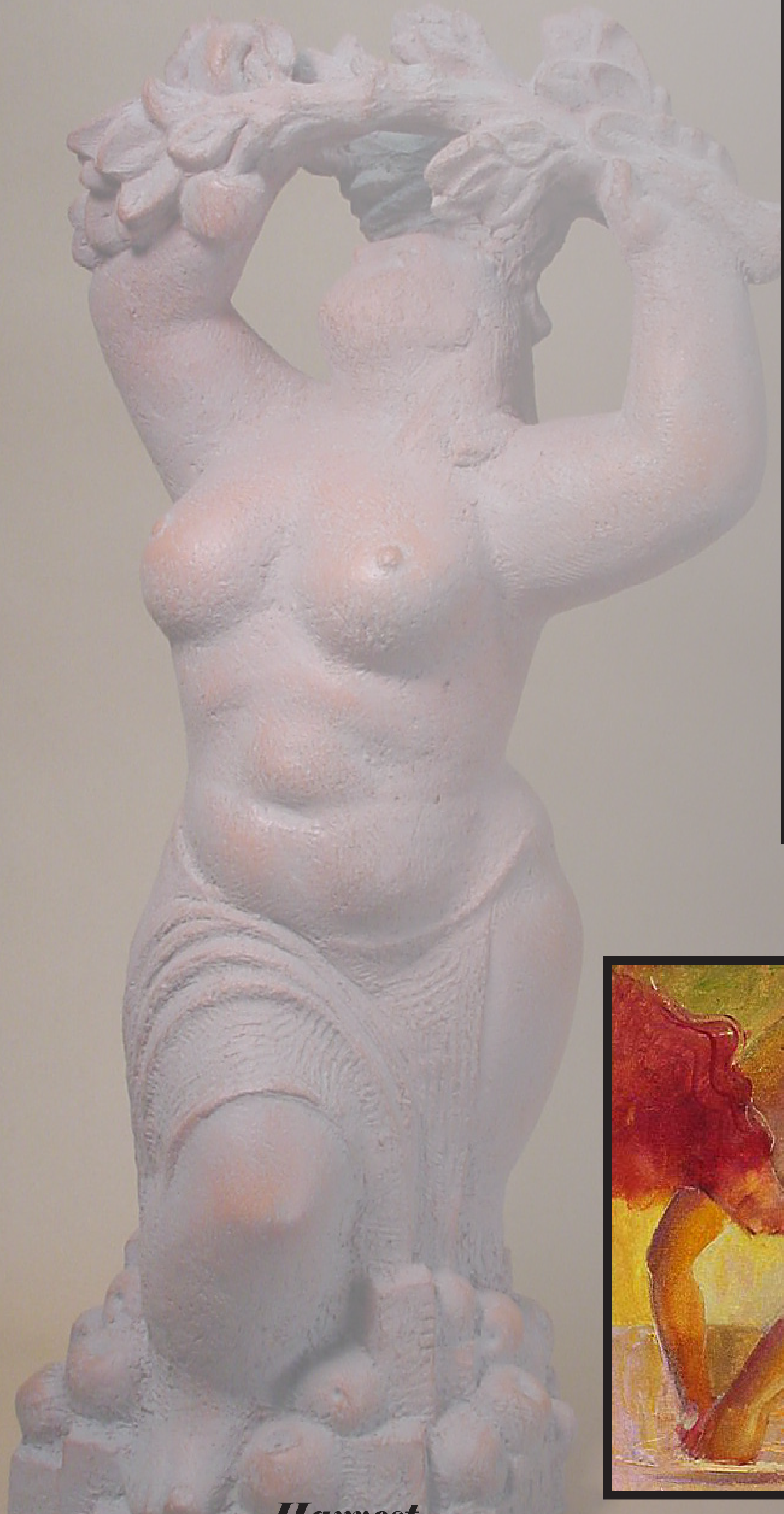


JD

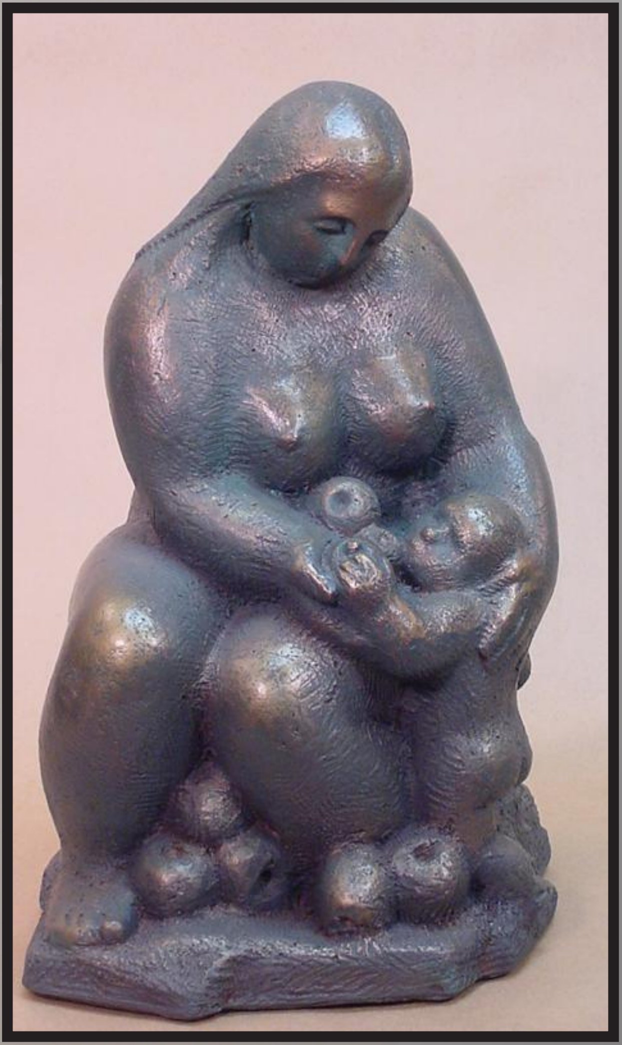


Liza

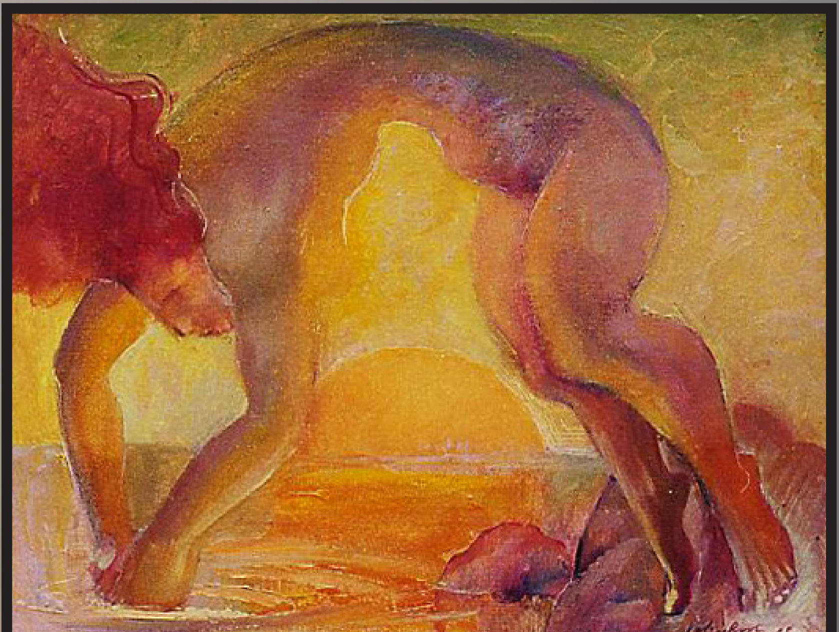
The Visceral Vibrance of Vadim Bora



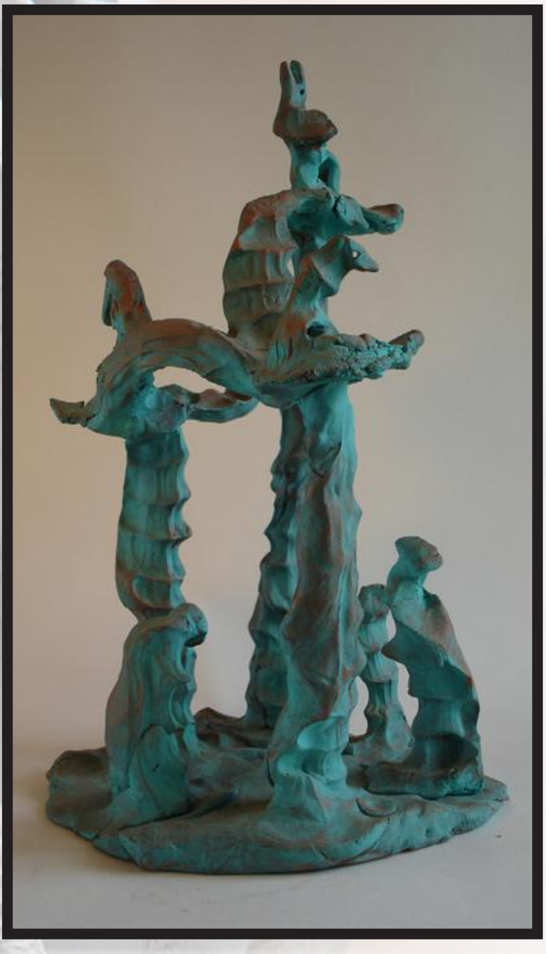
Harvest
17.5 x 8 x 5 inches, terra cotta



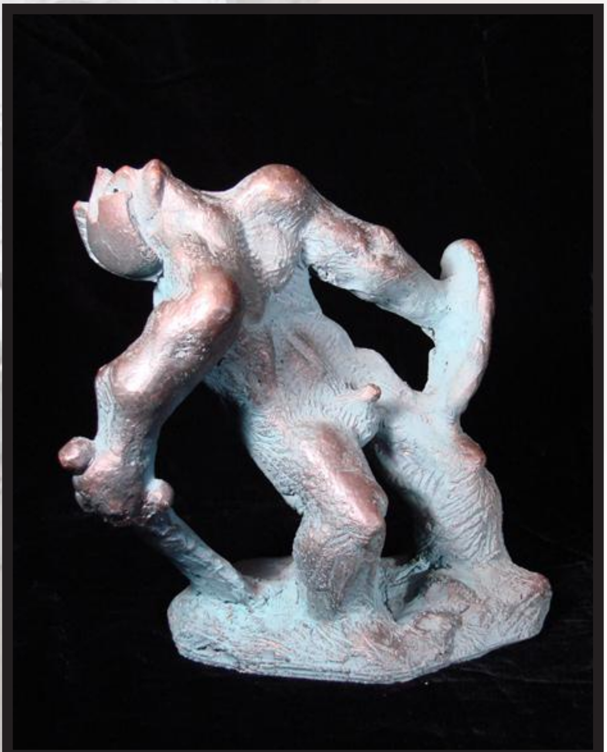
Mother and Child
16 x 10 x 9 inches, terra-cotta



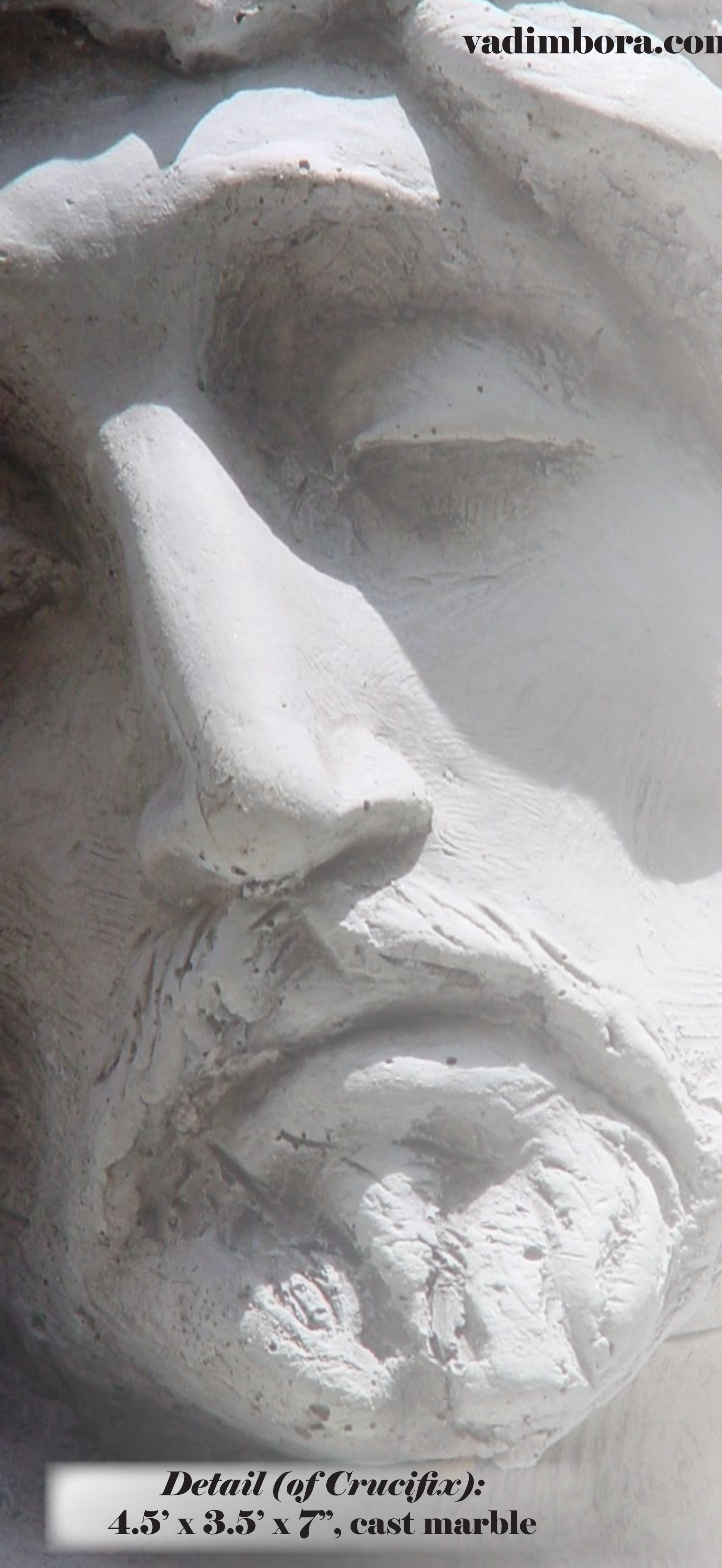
Diving into the Sunset
11 x 14 inches, oil on canvas



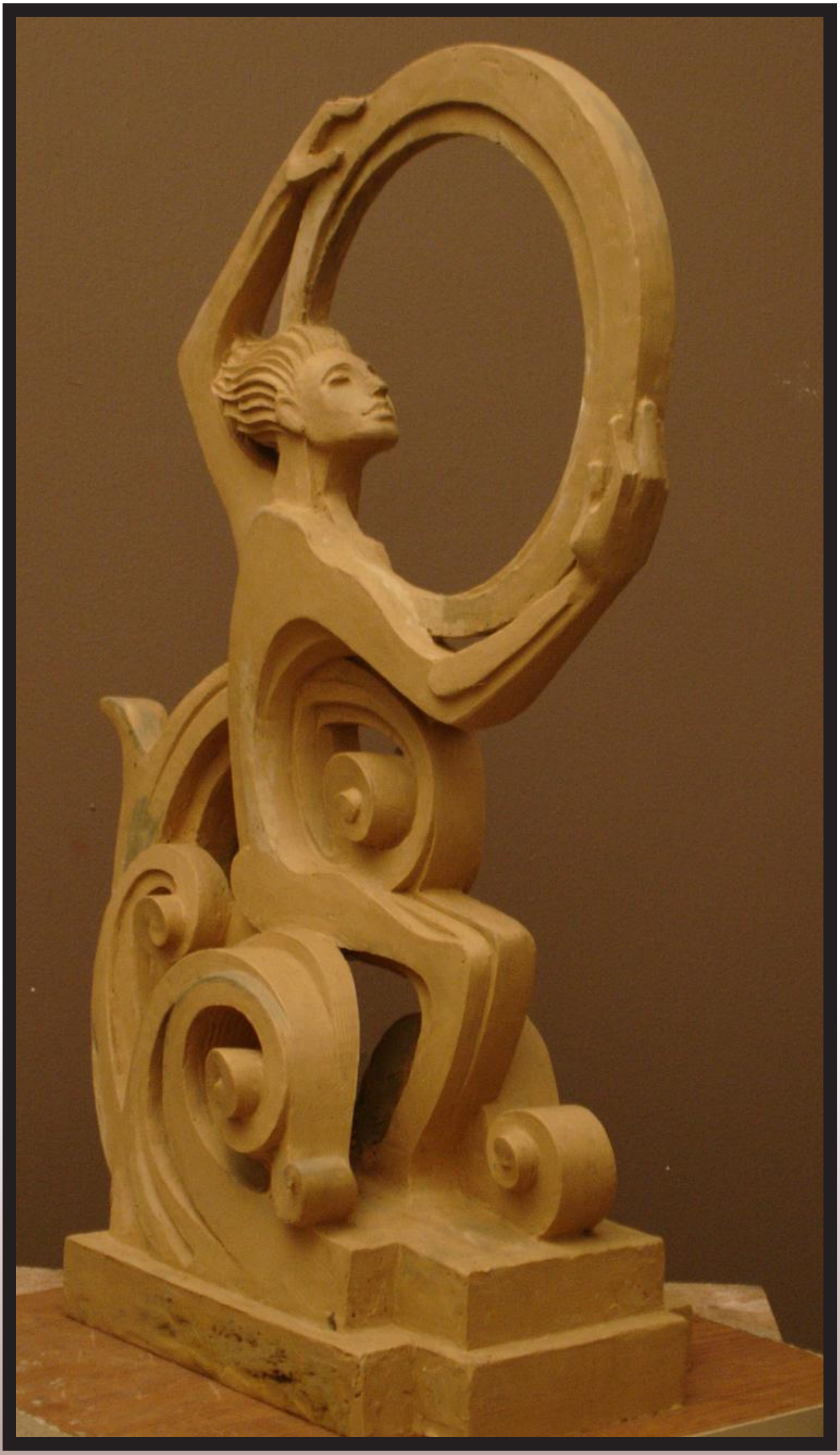
The Temple
14 x 10 x 8 inches, terra cotta



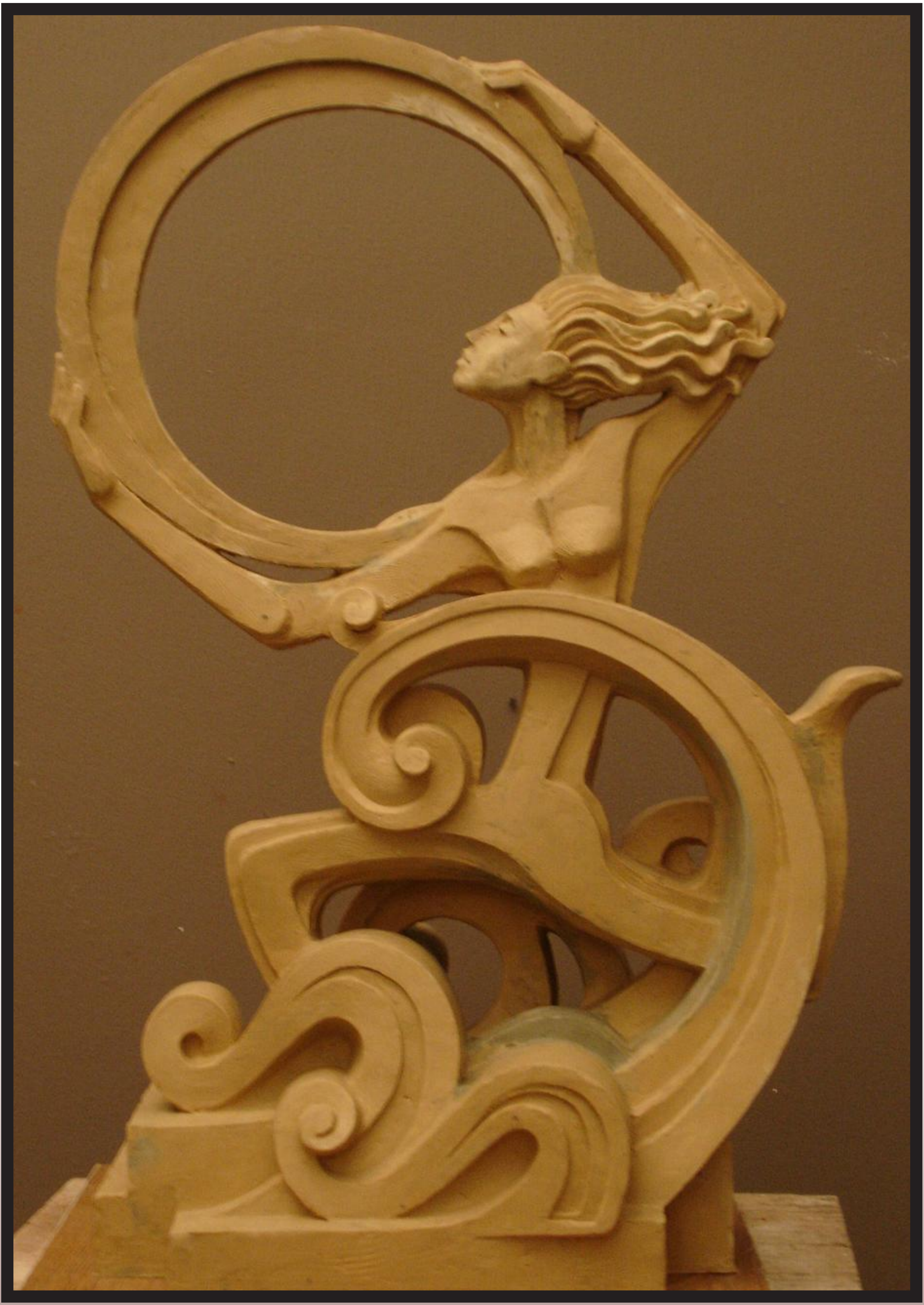
Wounded Warrior
9" x 6.5" x 3", terra cotta



Detail (of Crucifix):
4.5' x 3.5' x 7", cast marble

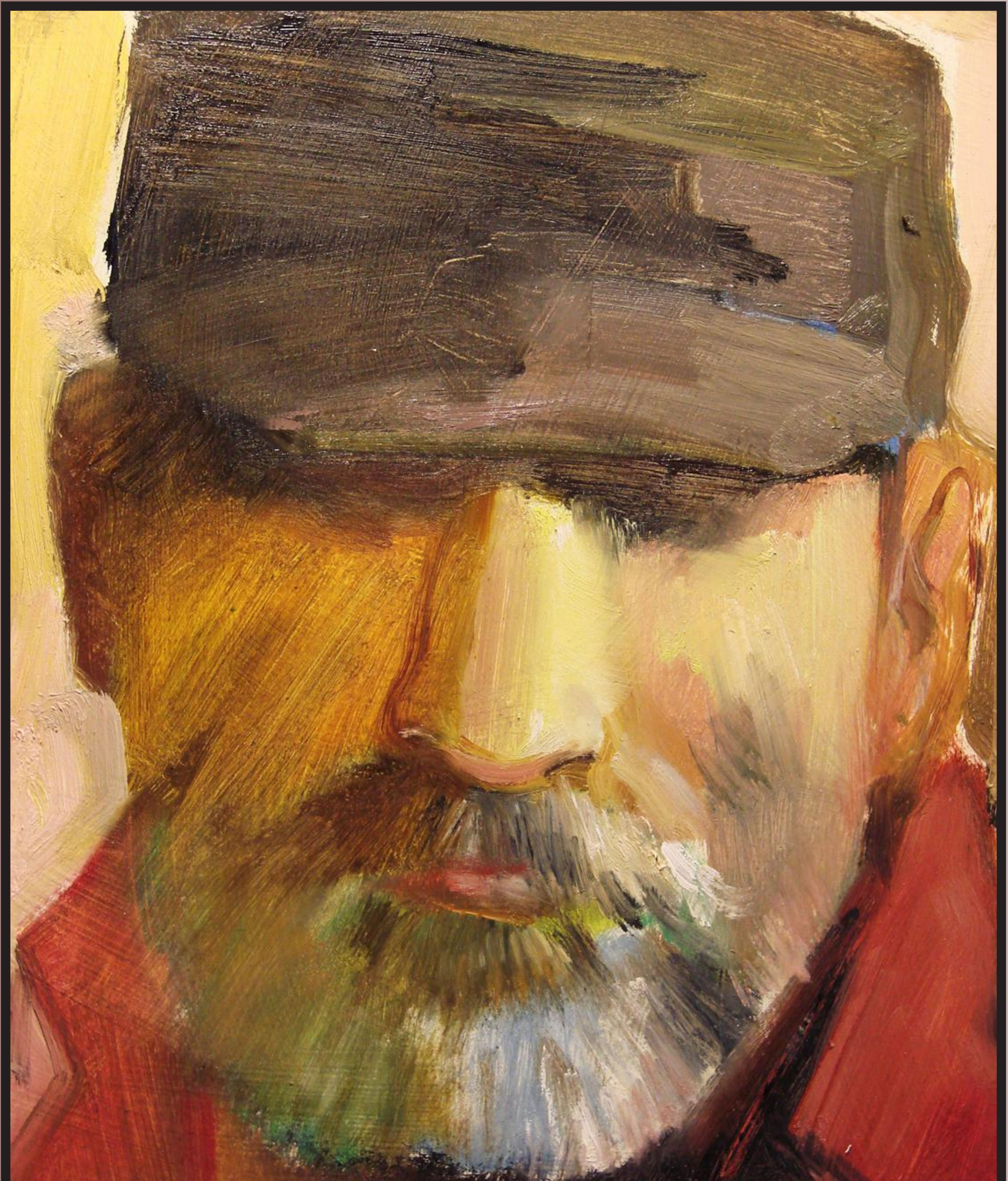


Art Deco
***20 x 15 x 8 inches,* two-sided plasteline maquette (male)**



Art Deco

20 x 15 x 8 inches, two-sided plasteline maquette (female)



Self Portrait in Favorite Cap

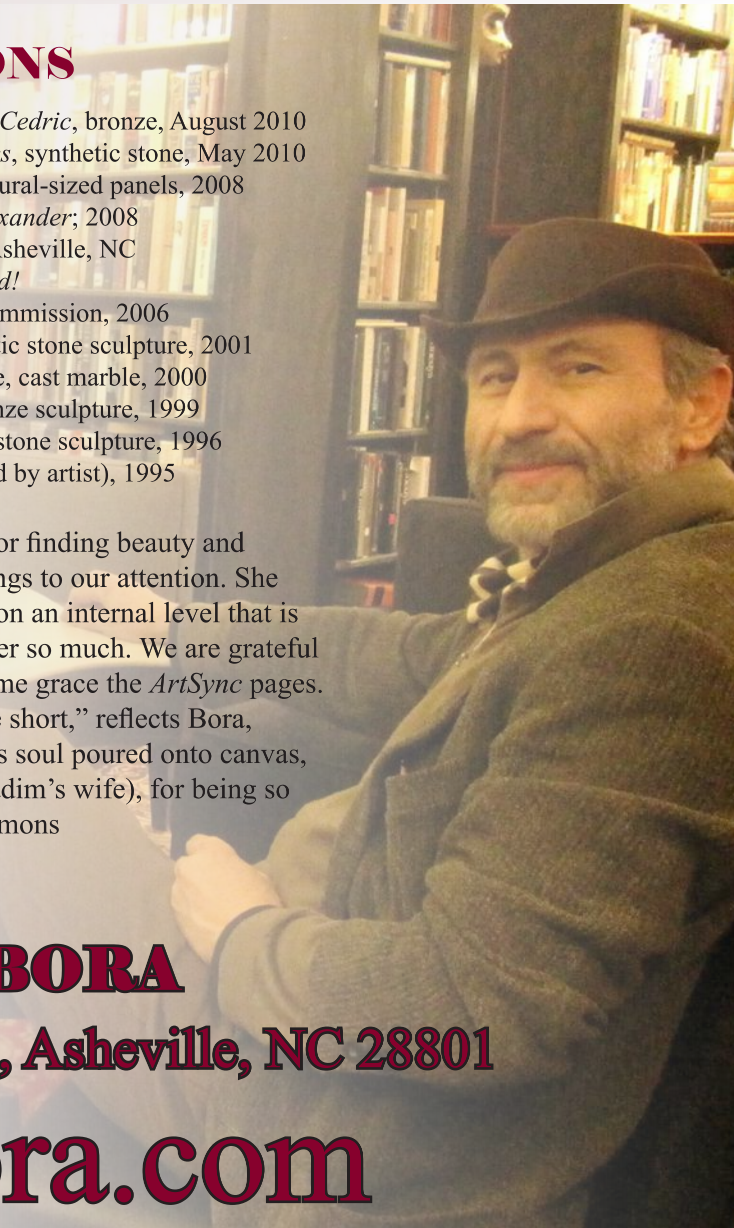
Vadim Bora
1954—2011

(Vadim Bora, passed away on January 5, 2011. He will be missed and remembered by his family, friends, students, collectors and so many others worldwide. Below are a few paragraphs taken from his obituary, as well as a list of places where you can see his work in person. For a more extensive list of Vadim's work and history, please visit his website at: vadimbora.com.)

Master Sculptor, painter, teacher, and philosopher Vadim Bora left this mortal coil Jan. 5 after complications from a catastrophic stroke. Born in Beslan, Russia in the Republic of North Ossetia, April 9, 1954, Vadim is an internationally recognized artist whose styles and media know no bounds. From oil landscapes, portraits, and allegorical narratives to emotive pen and ink line drawings, from fine silver engraving to monumental sculptures, Vadim's art reflects the complex genius of the man. His public works of art grace the streets, museums and institutions of Asheville, Fort Wayne, and Vladikavkaz, Russia. Private and corporate collections in dozens of countries retain his works as well.

An 'exuberant expressionist' in art and in life, Vadim's personality was as vibrant as his paintings. He was a friend and mentor to many, with a big heart, a generous soul, and wise words. A voracious reader and lover of intelligent debate, he did not suffer fools lightly. But welcomed all into his studio ("the artist's kitchen" he called it) for a cup of tea and perhaps something stronger, gifting visitors with conversation and ebullient stories when taking a break from the easel.

He leaves behind his wife, Constance, son Georgi of NYC, brothers German and Felix of Russia, in-laws Ken and Irene Richards, and scores of friends, colleagues, collectors, patrons and admirers on five continents. The artist lives eternally through his works, and his legacy will be carried on by his family.



PUBLIC COMMISSIONS

The Biltmore Company, Biltmore Estate, Asheville, NC — *Cornelia and Cedric*, bronze, August 2010
Modesto, Asheville, NC, Architectural Embellishment — *Nine Grotesques*, synthetic stone, May 2010
First Presbyterian Church, Fort Wayne, IN — *The Last Supper*, 3 mural-sized panels, 2008
Haywood County, NC — *Bronze Bust of Sherriff Tom Alexander*; 2008
Mission Hospital Reuters Children's Outpatient Center; Asheville, NC
Winner of Sculpture Competition, *On the Mend!*
Singleton Center; Hendersonville, NC — *Buffalo Soldier* Commission, 2006
VA Medical Center, Asheville, NC — *The Wings of Freedom* synthetic stone sculpture, 2001
St. Mary's Episcopal Parish, Asheville, NC — *Crucifix* sculpture, cast marble, 2000
City of Asheville, Asheville, NC, Urban Trail — *Cat Walk,* bronze sculpture, 1999
Bishop Chapel Retirement Center, St. Louis, MO — *Meditation,* stone sculpture, 1996
Café Sunflower, Atlanta, GA (entire interior design completed by artist), 1995

Editor's note: Deanna Lehman (*ArtSync* writer), has a rare ability for finding beauty and greatness. We are always excited by the artists she seeks out and brings to our attention. She wrote the piece on Vadim before his death, and connected with him on an internal level that is hard to put into words, but it's what she does and it's why we love her so much. We are grateful to her for sharing Vadim's story with us, and honored to have his name grace the *ArtSync* pages. The last words in Vadim's feature on pg. 12: "In the end, life is quite short," reflects Bora, "What you leave behind is your legacy, and for an artist — that is his soul poured onto canvas, sculpted into clay and stone." A special thank you for Constance (Vadim's wife), for being so helpful during this very difficult time. Thank you. —Christine Clemmons

VADIM BORA

30 ½ Battery Park Avenue, Asheville, NC 28801

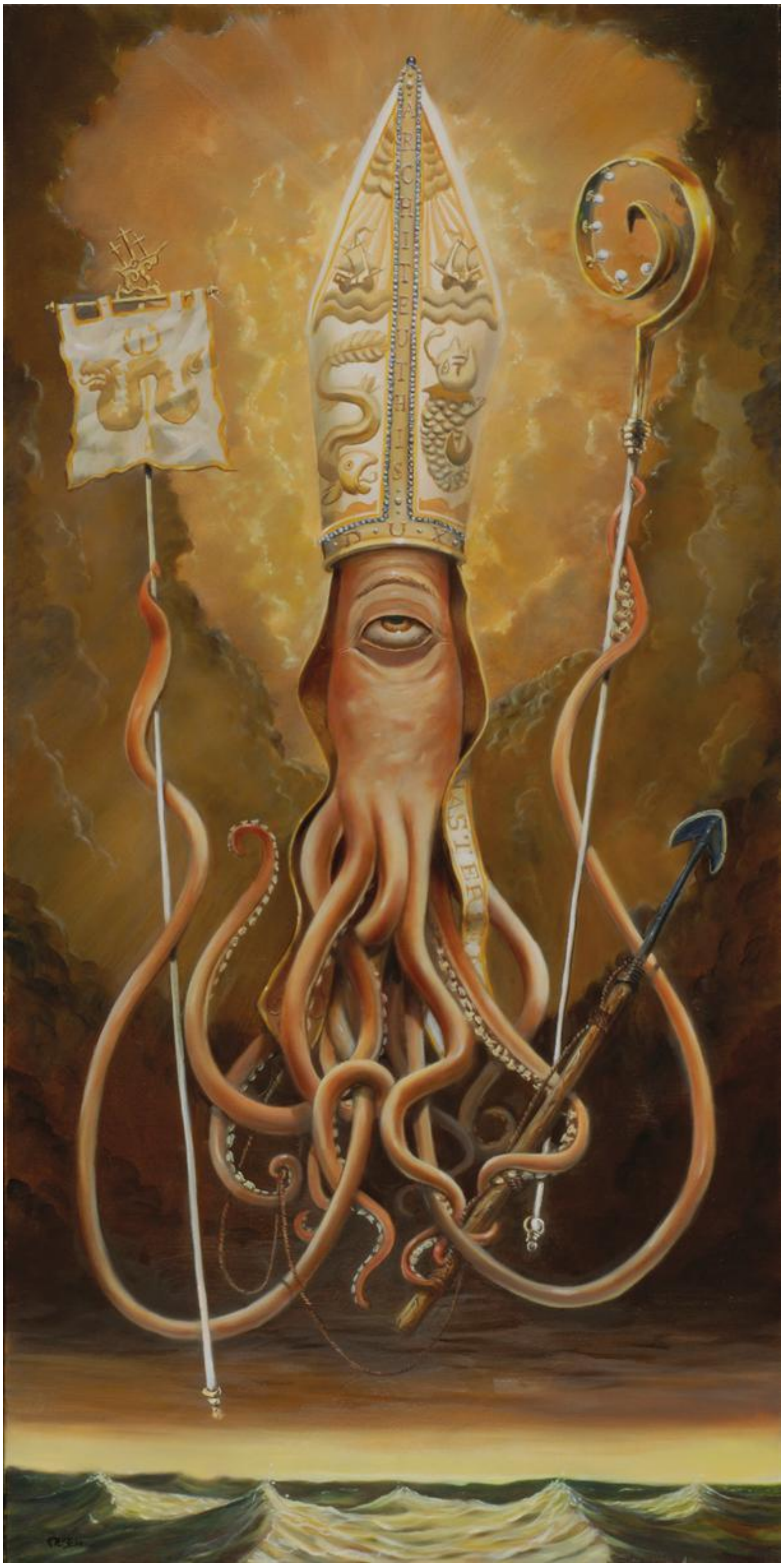
vadimbora.com

PAINTER *of* SHIPS, SAILORS, *and* BEASTS *of the* HIGH SEAS

SKOT OLSEN

HE FEARS NO CREATURE; HE TAMES THE UNIMAGINABLE

The Artist speaks directly from his Florida home to GEORGE PETROS



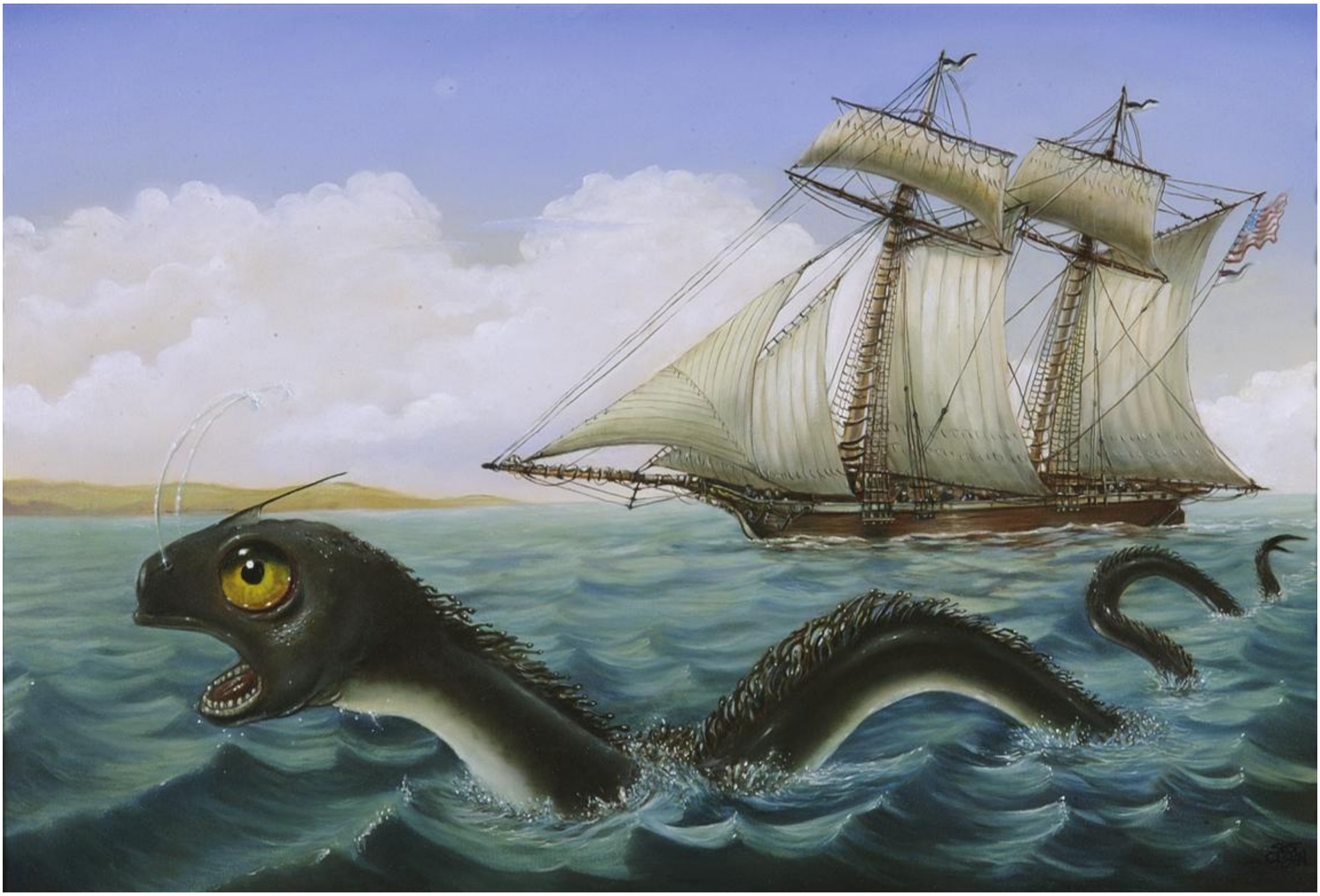
Blessed Saint Architeuthis
Oil on canvas, 24" x 48"

SKOT OLSEN rules the waves! His ships plow the Seven Seas. His sea monsters plumb the ocean depths. His sailors populate Davy Jones's Locker. Nautical Americana and denizens of the deep serve as subjects for most of his paintings, but he also cranked out a series depicting his psychedelic experiences. And a fabulous Florida-themed series, and a series of swamp-dwelling devils & demons, and so on!

Skot grew up around water — sailing, diving, snorkeling et cetera. He studies everything about naval history and the marine environment, from ships' rigging to biological nostalgia. He salutes the men who tamed our world's watery expanses. He's a master craftsman when it comes to painting the water itself, capturing its aquatic translucence in wave after tedious wave.

Whether your thing is the guys who hurled the harpoons, the sirens who lured them to their deaths, or the lighthouses that saved their lives, you'll find something to love in Skot's work. Giant squids? There's plenty of 'em. Menacing whales? Yes, of course. Old salts telling tales? Absolutely! The artist covers the waterfront. He guards our shores against sea serpents. He protects us from Poseidon's wrath. Skot Olsen is the premier painter of nautical fantasies, mixing fact and fiction, fearlessly confronting whatever comes from beneath the sea!

ArtSync: *I see a lot of sea monsters in your art.*
Olsen: I'm painting one now, actually.
ArtSync: *What exactly are they?*
Olsen: Oh, just sea monsters. They represent a force of nature more than an actual monster. I want all of them interacting with people.
ArtSync: *The classic sea monster engraved on old European maps of the world was part dinosaur, part fish —*
Olsen: Right. Some of the creatures in my paintings are from those old maps, actually. They were all based on real animals. Like the thing with the septum with two spouts — it's a right whale. The little sea serpents are probably oarfish. Rarely photographed. And of course, giant squids. And, the way dead basking sharks rot makes them look like dead dinosaurs. Occasionally you're going to see some weird, big stuff. Not just whales — whale sharks. Big, big sharks. There are some pretty big, mean things in the water.
ArtSync: *Is the Loch Ness Monster a classic sea monster?*



New England Sea Serpent **Oil on canvas, 20" x 30"**

Olsen: I don't think so. I don't know what that is. Didn't they just put air into some logs, let the logs float to the surface and when they would roll around, they'd look like a monster? I know the classic photo of it was just a hoax. It was a paper cut-out.

ArtSync: *I love that picture! I'm sorry you told me that.*

Olsen: No, the guy admitted on his deathbed that it was a cardboard cut-out he took a picture of.

ArtSync: *Huh. He should have kept that to himself!*

Olsen: I know, it killed the Loch Ness monster.

ArtSync: *What was that primitive dinosaur-era fish they caught off Africa? An ichthyosaur?*

Olsen: No, a coelacanth. An ichthyosaur is a really big dinosaur-like thing that kind of looks like a dolphin.

ArtSync: *That's right. Well, enough about sea monsters. How about giant squids? Can they pull ships down?*

Olsen: It's possible, I guess, 'cause they can get really, really big. Some guys in a lighthouse in South Africa saw a giant squid eat a right whale back in the Sixties. And squids really do attack people. There's really big squids out there. Those Humboldt squids attack people all the time. They rip 'em apart. They attack in a pack.

ArtSync: *They attack in a pack of big squids?*

Olsen: Yeah. And they're really fast. Super fast. They're totally scary. They're the most horrifying thing ever.

ArtSync: *What's their method of propulsion?*

Olsen: Jets.

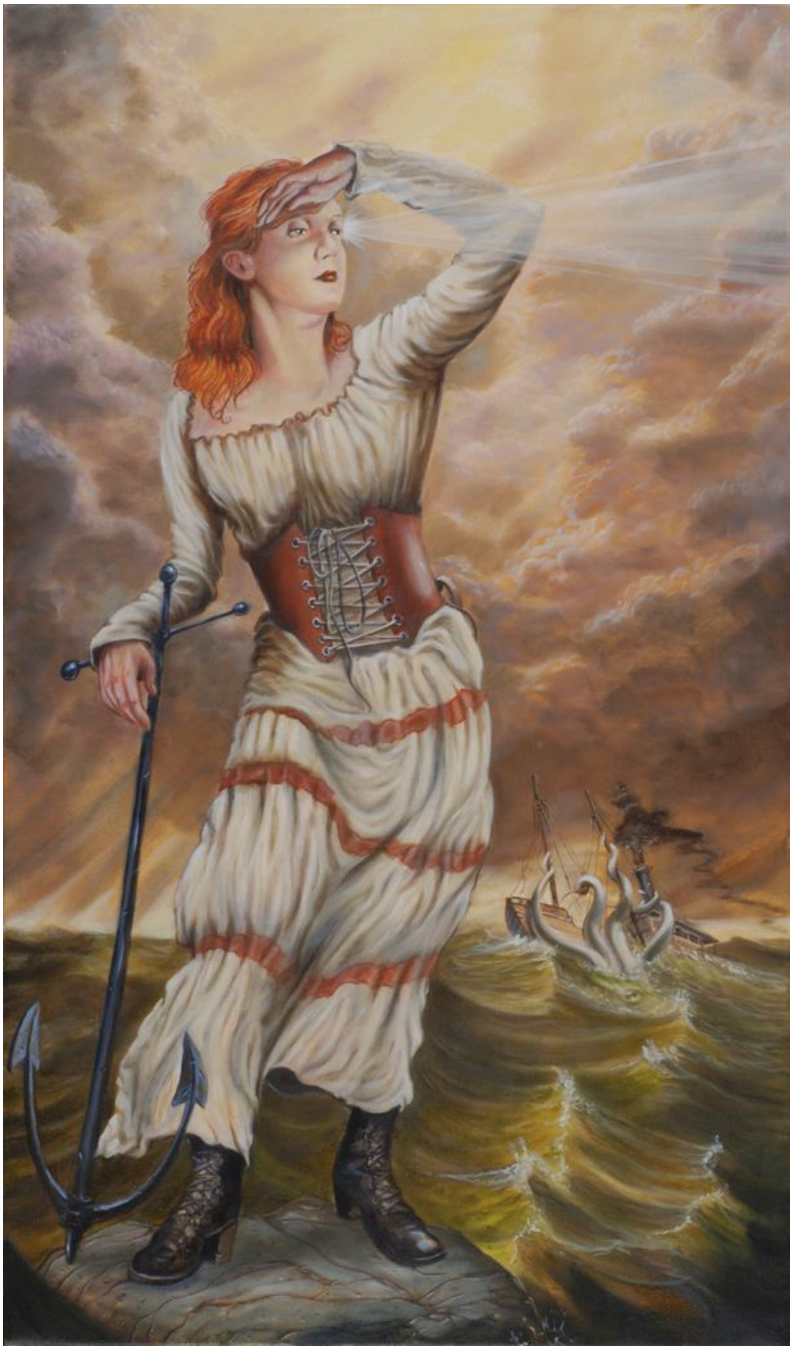
ArtSync: *Jet-powered squids — that's even scarier.*

Olsen: Horrifying jet-powered squids.

ArtSync: *And what's your interest in these horrifying jet-powered squids and other denizens of the deep?*

Olsen: I just love that stuff. I don't know where it comes from. It's like the worst thing that I can imagine. You're always interested in what horrifies you, right?

ArtSync: *Of course. Well, you're from Florida, so you're around this vast expanse of ocean —*



Lighthouse **Oil on canvas, 20" x 34"**

Olsen: I'm from Connecticut originally but yeah, I've been down here twenty years.

ArtSync: *Did you live by the ocean in Connecticut?*

Olsen: I sure did, and I worked in a marina and my folks and I would go sailing for at least a month every year. We'd sail all over New England and all through the West Indies.

ArtSync: *So, this interest in marine horrors —*

Olsen: I grew up on it. I'm interested in the surface of the water — the interaction between land and things that live in the sea. You know, the culture of sailors — it's a duality, right? They have their land life and they have their sea life. That culture is a symbol of the surface of the water. You know, that barrier — those are the people that live on that barrier.

ArtSync: *You paint whaling scenes, too —*

Olsen: I just think it's the most despicable thing, of course. I'm not down with that. Going out on the water and hunting giant monsters that live under the water and dragging them back — it's unbelievable, really.

ArtSync: *I agree. What are the particular challenges of maritime painting, and depicting water, and the interactions of the water and clouds and stuff?*

Olsen: Well, that's what I like the most. The most challenging thing is the research. I like to research the rigging of ships — it's those details that are difficult. But the water and clouds and sea monsters — that's what I really like. Putting together a little story, that's also challenging.

ArtSync: *The ships you paint are pretty cool, I've gotta say. I take it they're all real —*

Olsen: Well yeah, they're based on actual ships. My favorite are the steam sail ships from the mid-Nineteenth Century. I like a boat that has a mast and steam power.

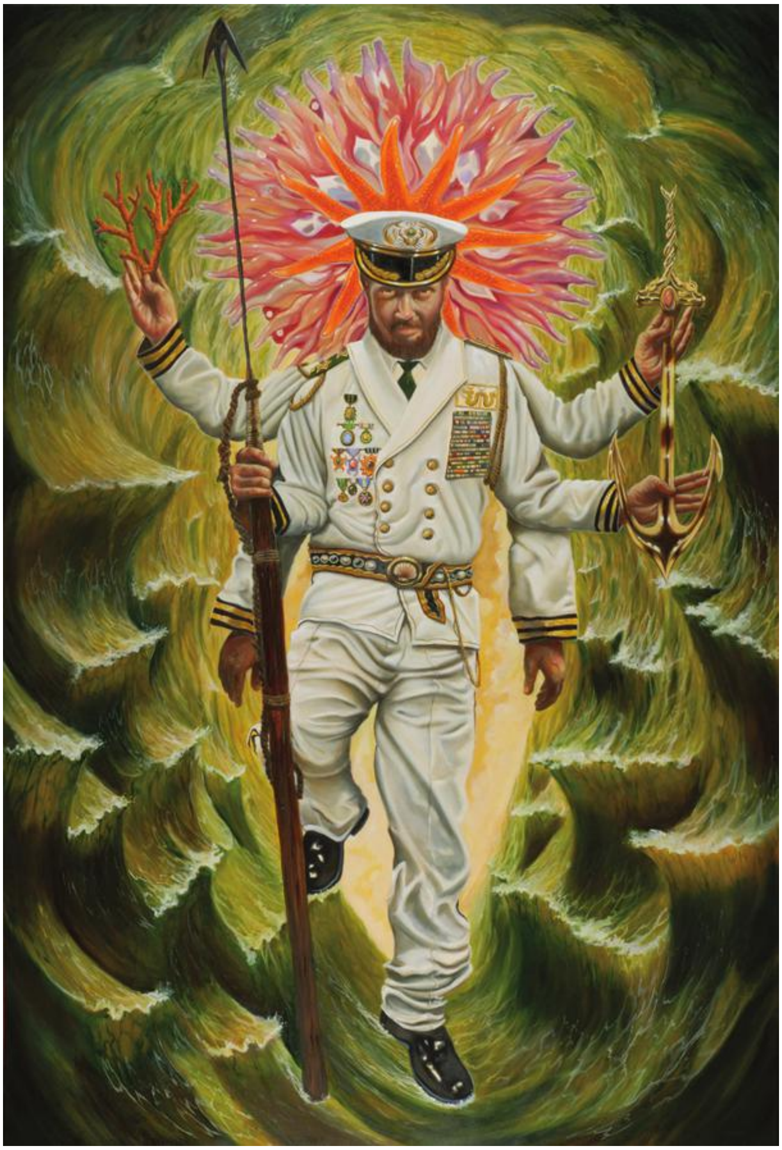
ArtSync: *It's like a hybrid ship.*

Olsen: That's exactly what it was. It was a hybrid ship.

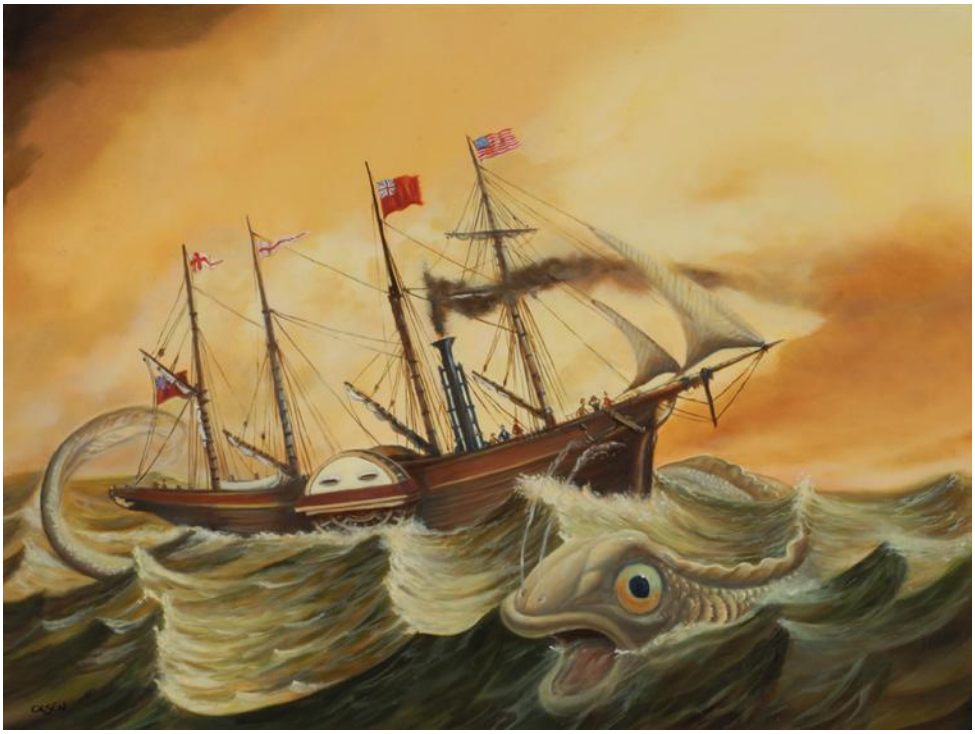
ArtSync: *Are there maritime painters that you like?*

Olsen: There's this guy Carl Evers. His paintings are very realistic portraits of ships — he's the best painter of water I've ever seen. I look at his stuff a lot. I like paintings of naval battles, and general maritime commerce paintings where they'll show a port and ships raising or taking down rigging. I like looking at whaling paintings, and anything to do with fishermen.

ArtSync: *The maritime commerce paintings that you mentioned — were they the equivalent of today's corporate annual-report art?*



above: ***Poseidon*** Oil on canvas, 78” x 52”
below: ***Great Western*** Oil on board, 18” x 24”



Olsen: A lot of them were commissioned — like, if a trading company had a fleet of ships, they'd commission paintings of those ships to hang in the office. Or, there were artists who were just into the maritime stuff, who would record scenes. And often a captain would have a portrait painted of his ship to hang in his house.

ArtSync: *Do you collect that stuff?*

Olsen: Yeah, I have a good library of it.

ArtSync: *What do you like of the current crop of art? Anything come to mind?*

Olsen: My buddy, Todd Shorr. I also like Neo Rauch, Luis Gispert, and the tattoos of Jeff Gogue and Nick Baxter.

ArtSync: *Todd Shorr — he's pretty amazing, isn't he?*

Olsen: Yeah, he's a swell cat. I like him a lot. Really, really nice guy. You know, all those Low Brow guys are great.

ArtSync: *Is your stuff Low Brow?*

Olsen: I guess so. I get lumped in with all that stuff. There's a new book coming out, *Weirdo Noir.* There's a section on me in there. I guess I'm Low Brow, right?

ArtSync: *Well, yes and no. Maybe technique-wise the case could be made, but I think with Low Brow the subject matter seems more free-associative whereas your stuff is an ongoing study of an institution —*

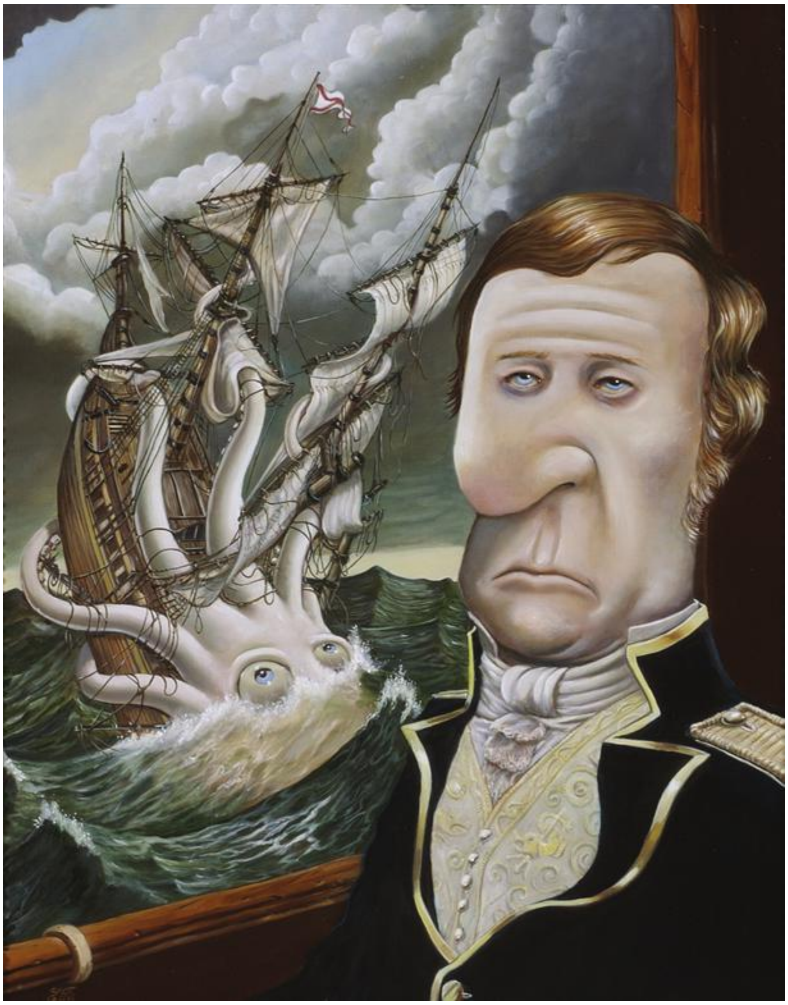
Olsen: Yeah, that's true. I kinda am in a rut, but every time I try to break out of it and try to do sometime else, it doesn't make me happy and it never turns out so great.

ArtSync: *You're just kidding when you say a rut, right?*

Olsen: No, but in a good way. It's all I think about.

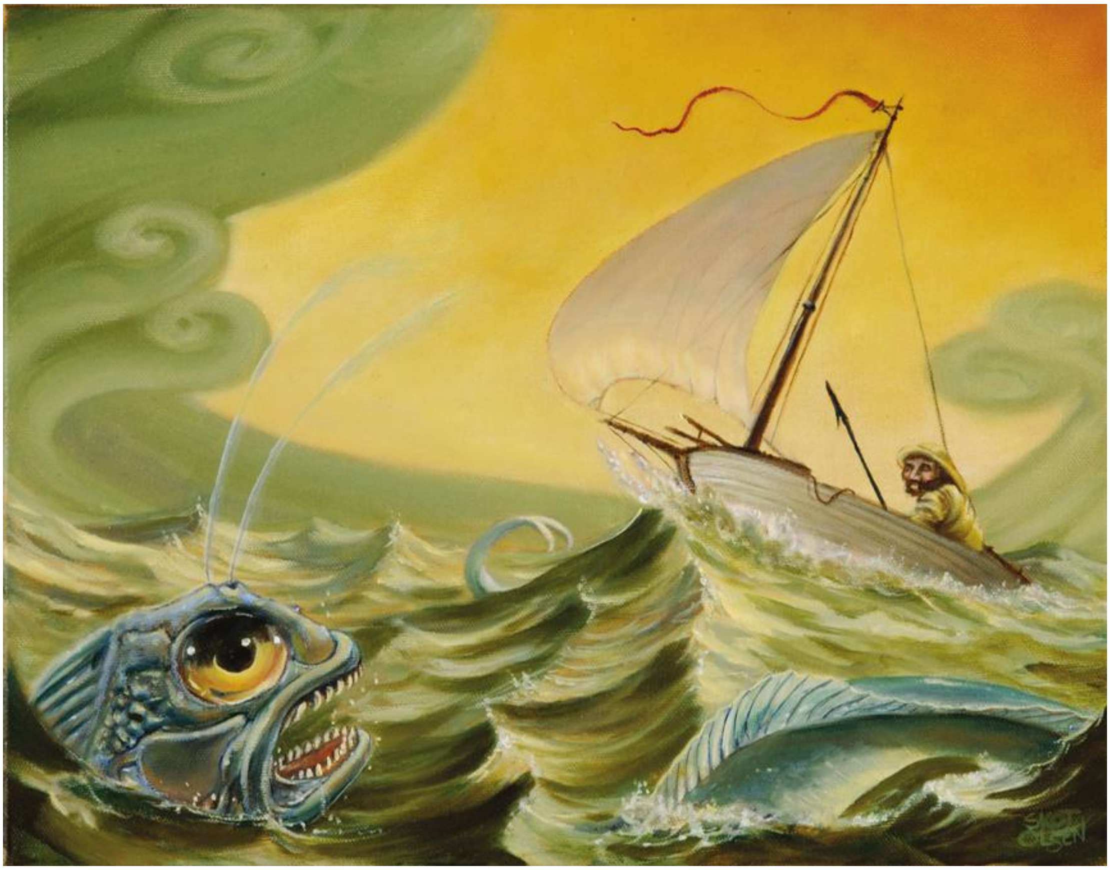
ArtSync: *Did you study painting?*

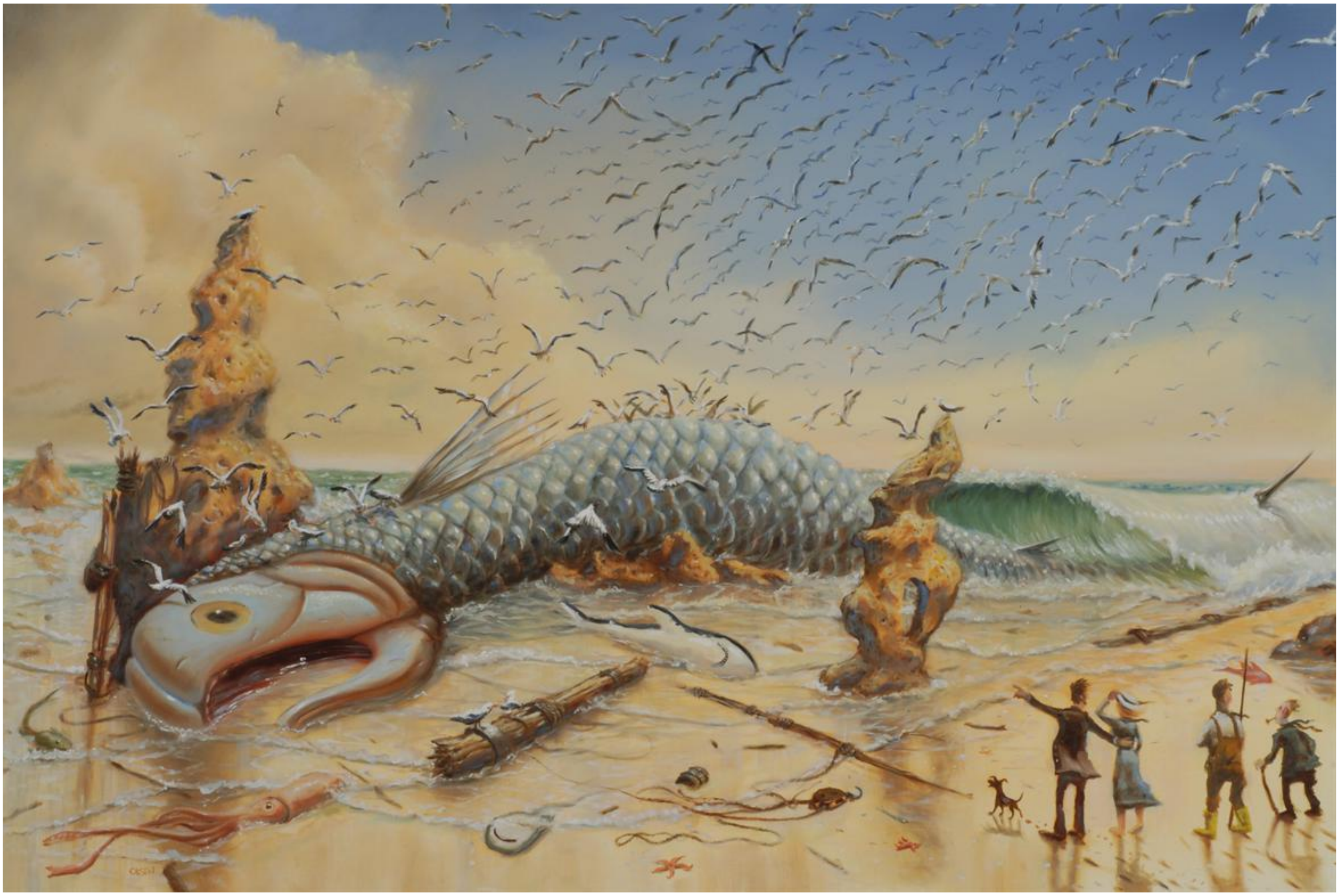
Olsen: Well, I went to the Joe Kubert School For Animation And Comic Book Art. It's in



above: ***Alexander's Leviathan*** Oil on canvas, 26" x 32"

below: ***Afternoon Hunt*** Oil on canvas, 30" x 24"





Après la Tempête **Oil on board, 36” x 24”**

New Jersey. There were good instructors there. My grandfather taught me when I was a kid. My family was into a lot of maritime art and everybody on my father’s side is some kind of an artist. My grandfather was constantly painting pictures of the sea because we’re Danes, you know? Then I studied painting on my own. I have a lot of friends who are painters who give me tips.

ArtSync: *What year were you born?*

Olsen: ’69.

ArtSync: *Do you work as a quote-unquote commercial artist, in addition to painting?*

Olsen: Yeah, I do all kinds of stuff. This year I learned to do tattoos. It was more of that sailor culture.

ArtSync: *Are you doing nautical tattoos?*

Olsen: Yeah. You know my painting *Blessed St. Architeuthis?* I’m doing that on a guy’s back.

ArtSync: Architeuthis *is the Latin name for squid, isn’t it?*

Olsen: Yeah, it’s the giant squid. It’s *architeuthis dux.* So, a lot of people found out I’m now tattooing at Babylon Tattoo in Ft. Lauderdale, and I had the pleasure of doing a bunch of nautical stuff. One guy had me do a cartoon sea captain on his leg. That was good. And, occasionally I work for this mural company, decorating offices. A lot of scenes of fish and stuff, not very Skot Olsen-y. I do get to do some water and stuff from time to time. It’s fun and it pays really well.

ArtSync: *Good. And where do you live now?*

Olsen: Deerfield Beach, Florida. And I love it here. It’s super-fantastic. There are beautiful reefs with lots of sea life. In fact, I snorkel right in Boca Raton. There’s a huge ledge and a line of reefs that goes on and on. And there’s tons of shipwrecks — the scuba diving here is incredible, too. It’s really nice. It’s great.

ArtSync: *Well, be careful down there.*

Olsen: You know I will! •

skotolsen.com

Kiersten Red — Carving Her Own Path

by Jeffrey M. Kellen

Constantia Brâncuşi, the Romanian modernist who influenced generations of aspiring artists to break the mold of conventional sculpture, perhaps said it best when he touted, “Nothing big grows under the shadow of big trees.”

Phoenix artist **Kiersten Red** took her cue from this aphorism when she decided to follow her own path and create a unique and organic style of sculpture that blends the styles of such visionaries as Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, and Joan Miró.

The native of Philadelphia was initially focused on performance art, such as dance and theater, through her elementary years, but the mother-of-one said that was soon to change.

“I went to Cambridge School of the Arts in Boston for high school and realized that performance art was not what I wanted to do after taking my first ceramics class. With that, I fell in love with producing objects with my hands, and continued onto Loyola University in New Orleans.”

After her stay in the South, Red returned to the city of her birth to study at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, where she took her first stone carving class. For Red, this was her gestalt moment.

“While carving stone, I discovered the spirit of my material and the properties peculiar to it,” Red describes. “I moved from metal to stone and completed my Bachelor of Fine Arts where I concentrated in sculpture. I then moved to Arizona for a brief stint at Arizona State University for some graduate work.”

Indeed, to look at her stonework is to see this same spirit transmogrified into any number of incarnations, from carvings reminiscent of Moore’s fluid and organic stylings, to that of the geometric abstraction period that pervaded the Twentieth Century. Red utilizes an amalgamation of many of these forms to compose a brand all her own. The synergy of these combinations often result in gravity-defying works and others that have an *au naturel* countenance about them that invites the viewer to speculate on whether the object in question is truly an artificial structure.

Kiersten Red

“In my work, I strive to express hidden, subconscious feeling,” Red explains. “The experience does not take place in ego-projection or image association, but through an immediate and spontaneous reaction — abstract art, held in the Modernist tradition.”

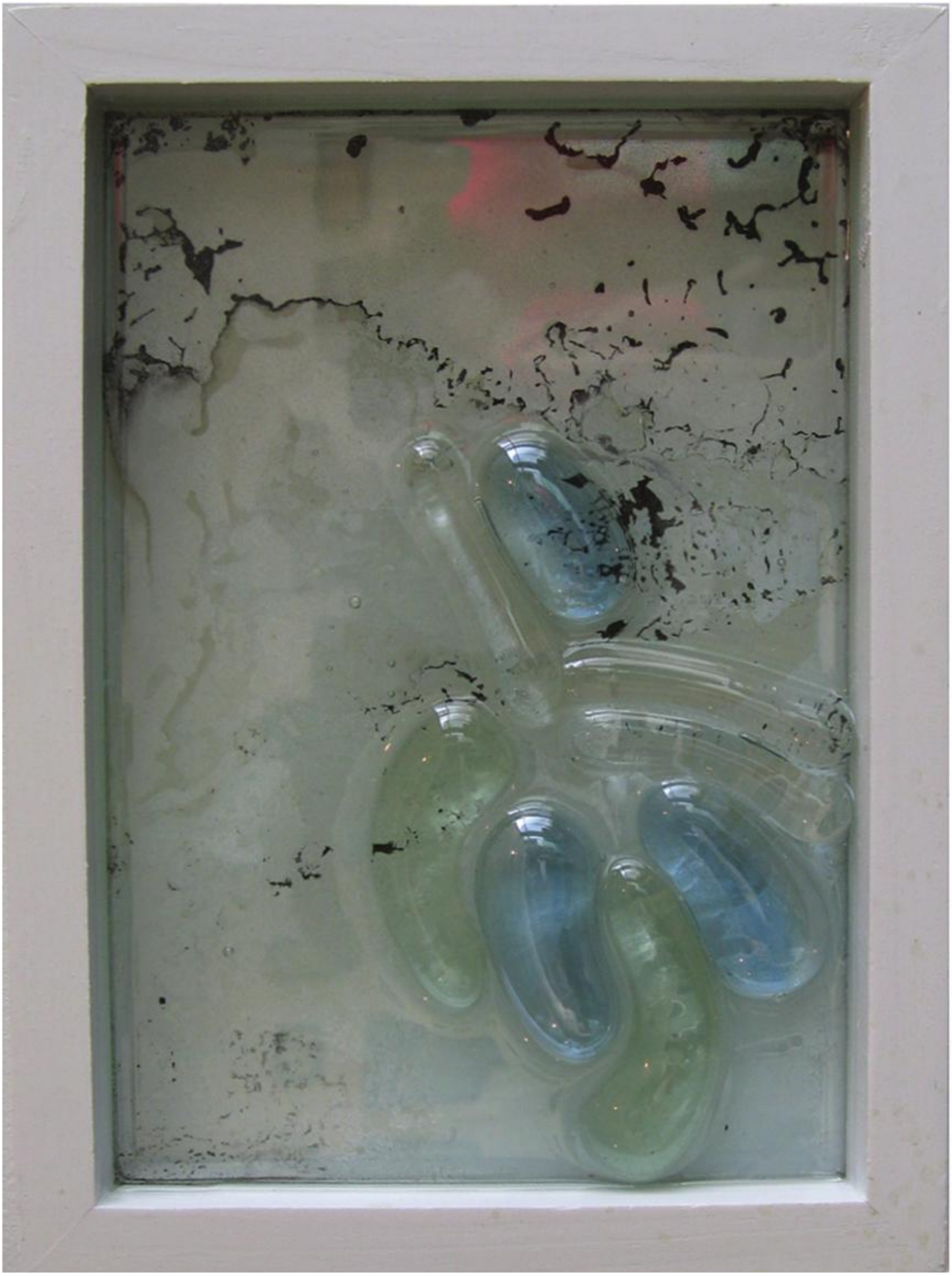
By using materials such as stone, wood, metal, and resin, Red can attempt to impart a sense of calmness and serenity in her art.

“Sculpture is forever,” Red declares. “Fixed in one position, it can be looked at repeatedly, always revealing something new.”

Not all of her work is solely in stone, however. Red combines her media as much as she does her styles, using wood, stone, and other naturally-occurring materials to make a confluence of elements that help to define her artistic agenda.

As diverse as Red’s art is, it does not come without a healthy history of influence, with a coterie of carvers and shapers that have been as influential on as many others as they have this Phoenix resident.

“My art is influenced by great sculptors and painters, including, but not limited to Noguchi and Brâncuşi, for their calmness and complex simplicity and mixture of materials,” she explains. “Barbara Hepworth, with her feminine perspective in sculpture, as strong as any male in her time, and Miro, for his organic, whimsical painted forms were also major influences.”

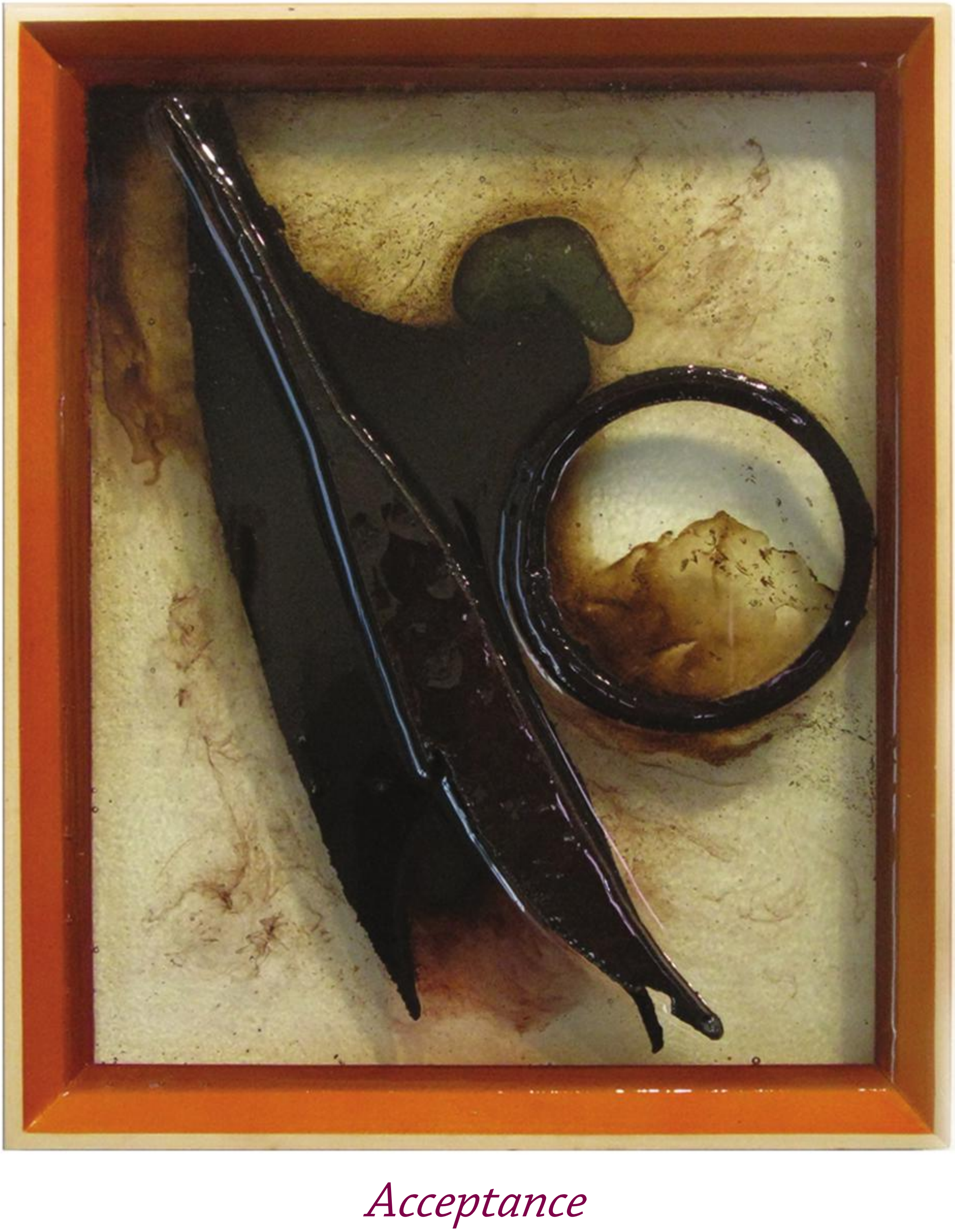


untitled 001

Red says that for her, the work evokes the following imagery:
submerged feeling, comforting space, warm water, darkened room, atmosphere, silence, and touch.

One of Red's most intriguing works is an untitled 2008 piece [*shown above*], a wall sculpture that was formed with industrial resin, molded recycled glass, and ink. "This piece was composed, not carved — positioning the glass within the wooden frame, and alternatively pouring resin and ink for the final desired effect. This, like similar wall pieces, is a conceptual window I cannot easily express in words."

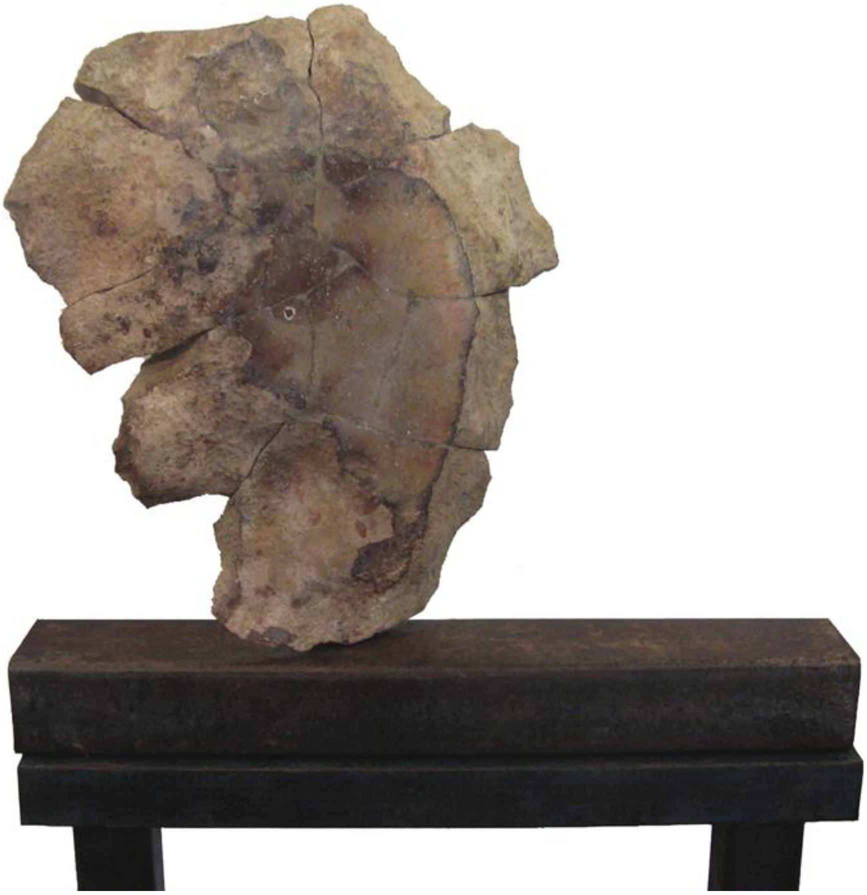
The overall organic feel of the framed work draws feelings of a serene sapience, particularly when viewing the cluster of amoeba-like embryos that inhabit the lower right quadrant of the work. The soft blues and greens that color the transparent protozoan shapes lend a surreal Sci-Fi ambience to the entire work.



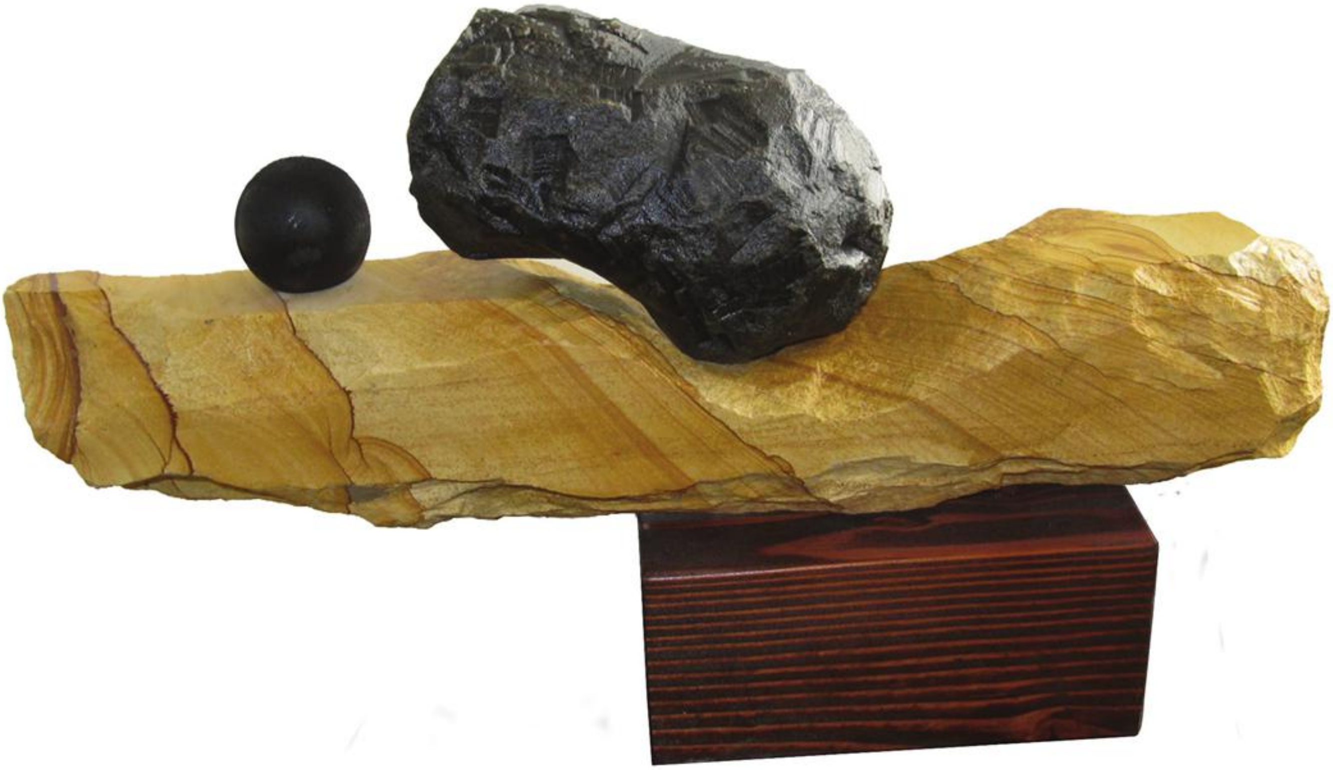
Acceptance

Created with industrial resin, steel, carved marble and ink. *Acceptance* was previously displayed at the Longhouse Gallery in Phoenix, and has since moved on to a private collection.

Kiersten Red



Untitled 002



The Missing Piece, Number 2

Kiersten Red — Carving Her Own Path

The influence of Isamu Noguchi, the Japanese-American sculptor known for his elegant abstractions and rounded forms, is evident in Red's works, particularly when looking at Noguchi's well-known *Heimar*. Red's own work with Picasso Marble has the same semblance of grace and refinement that has long been identified with Noguchi's own palette of techniques. To look at Red achievements with the marble is to look upon a rocky cloud formation that takes on the chimerical appearance of an infinite number of apparitions.

With organic and streamlined features simluar to those that characterized Barbara Hepworth's early period, Red captures in some of her work the same execution that the British sculptor did with her piece entitled *Monolyth Empyrean*. One of Red's works resembles the aqueous being that greets the crew of an underwater oil platform in the movie *The Abyss*. With a glassy smooth surface of a lava-like nematode, the only other adornments are two cone-shaped affixtures resembling, due to their proximity to one another, breasts that appear to offer themselves to its own young.

"I define my current work as freestanding sculpture and textural-framed resin, mixing disciplines and encouraging the amalgamation between painting, sculpture, and architecture," Red explains. "Over the long term, I see my work moving away from galleries and into more site-specific directions."

The artist specified that some of these locales would probably include collaborations with city planners, architects, landscape designers, and those in the business of creating theater set designs.

For example, her work entitled *Acceptance*, a wall sculpture created with industrial resin, steel, carved marble and ink was previously displayed at the Longhouse Gallery in Phoenix and has since moved on to a private collection.

"In this piece, the stone represents a feeling of longing," Red explains. "The landscape inside the steel circle is the desire."

Indeed, the steel band, at first glance, creates the effect of looking through some cosmic peephole at a landscape that appears to be some far-off mountain.The other dominating feature in the piece calls to mind the works of John Searles, with its minimalist overtones. The resin centerpiece evokes imagery of a bird's wing dipped in oil, very similar to Searles's own *Reflected Landscape*, and is ripe with cutout shapes that require the viewer to step outside his or her usual receptive art lens and instead actualize meaning from within, instead of simply walking up to the work for a "gimme" message.

Red's gravity-defying sculpture *The Missing Piece, Number 2* has at first glance the feel of a Rube Goldberg device. Created in 2008, this freestanding work is made of carved limestone from Thailand (the yellow and black parts of it) and pine (the small sphere that seems to totter perilously close to rolling off the actual artwork itself). The base, supporting the Dr. Seuss-like formation, is made of cherry wood.

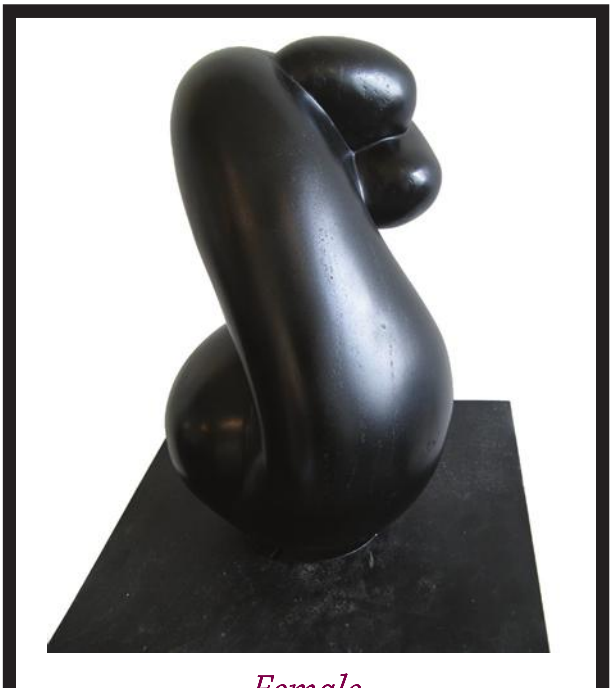
"All pieces have been carved, with some of the stone's original texture left intact," the artist says of her conception. "The relationship between both of the black aspects is one of the desire to feel complete — filling an empty void."

Red says that the inspiration for this particular work came from the children's book, The Missing Piece, by Shel Silverstein. It has previously been displayed at the Lucky Rabbit in Phoenix, and has since moved on to a private collection, as well.

"Currently my artwork is displayed in various local Phoenix galleries, held by private collectors, and a private showing was scheduled in Philadelphia last November," Red states.

In general, a single piece of work to develop from start to finish will vary based on the medium. Her smaller resin pieces will usually be created within a week on average, while the larger stone sculptures can take months to complete.

"I work as an artist full-time in my personal studio, as much as my motherly duties to a four-year-old will allow."



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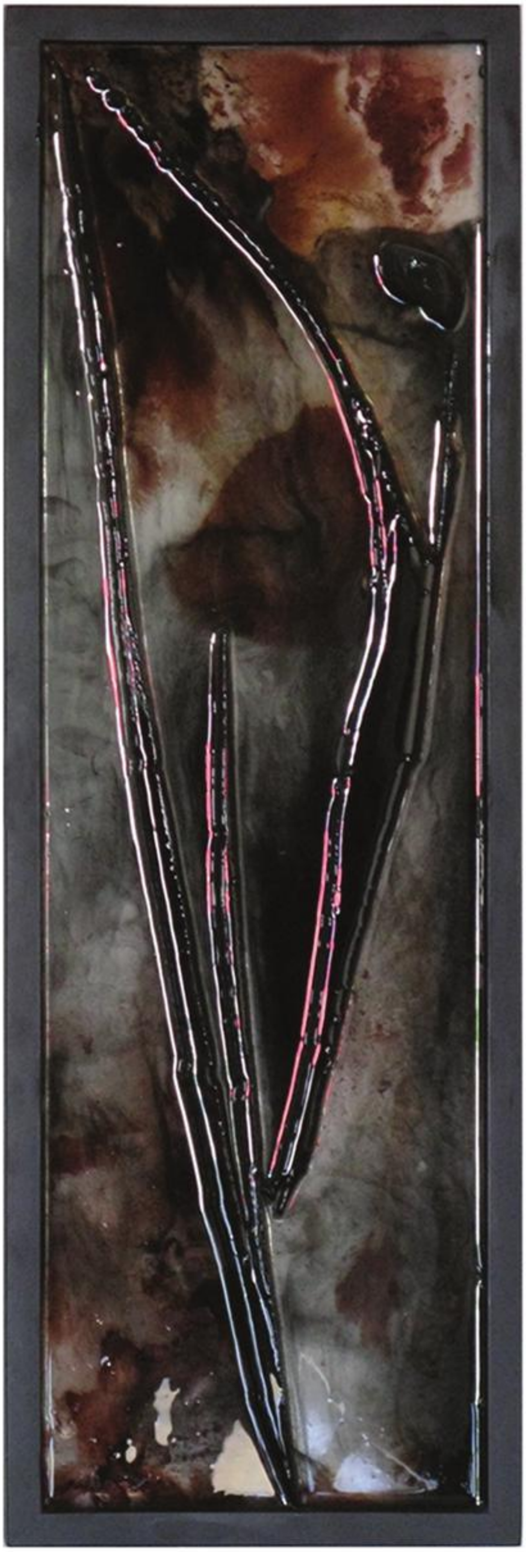

Tree of Life
32"x11," steel, resin and ink

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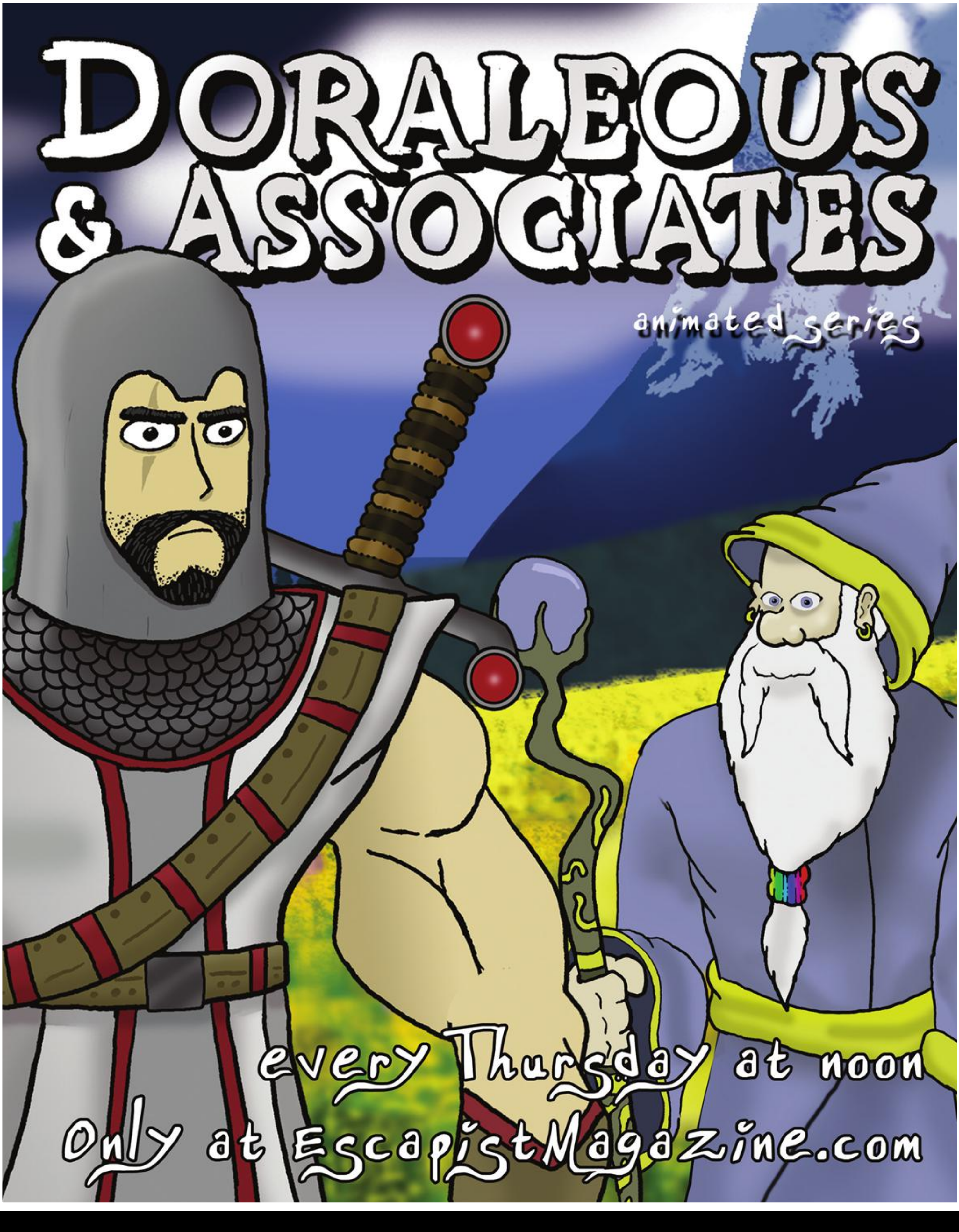
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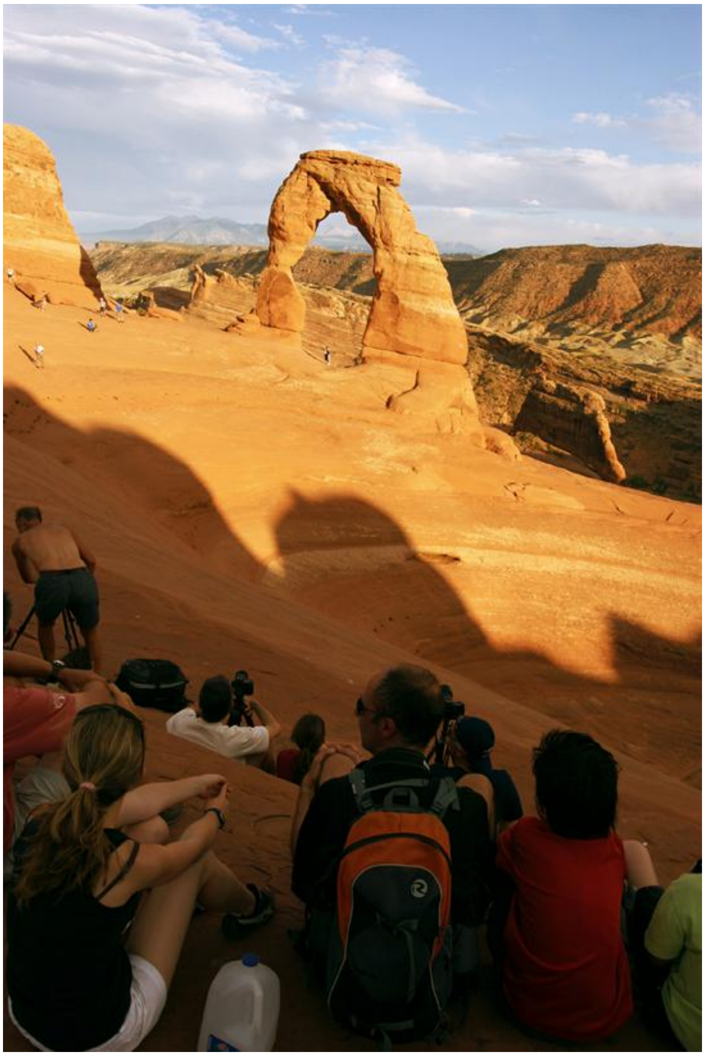
by STERLING E. STEVENS

Installment # 3: *Shhh...just shoot!*

Upon the moment of arrival, I immediately fell in love with National Arches Park. It was a spontaneous, unplanned excursion after being convinced to make the side-trip while visiting a fellow photographer in Durango, Colorado. Following an entire day of road travel from Denver, hearing “You must go to Moab, it’s only three hours away from here!” seemed relatively infallible logic. As a photographer accustomed to the rolling hills labeled as mountains in the Appalachians, I began an unforgettable journey through east Utah, navigating among the most unique series of natural formations, outcroppings, and canyons I had personally witnessed.

One of the most famous and photographed formations on park grounds is the Delicate Arch. Two footpaths to view this wonder stem from a nearby parking lot. Because I arrived near sunset, I took the quicker and less intimidating uphill hike to view the arch from across the canyon. Despite being in good physical shape and already having three days to adjust to the high elevation above sea level, the walk left me slightly winded with all of the camera equipment strapped to my back. Upon reaching the top of the climb, the Delicate Arch and its immediate surroundings were in clear view. Beyond the arch were tiny specs of people grouped throughout the area. As the sun began to dip behind the western mountains, a thunderous sound of applause resonated from across the canyon. An adjacent photographer and I exchanged surprised glances upon hearing the clapping. Wow, I thought, *the sunset must be so unspeakably beautiful to evoke such an emotional response — I must see that tomorrow!*

I decided to stay overnight in Moab and take advantage of the extra day to witness the effect of morning daylight on the landscape that I could not see the previous evening. Early the next afternoon, I took the longer and moderately strenuous 1.5-mile hike in 95 degree heat to witness the Delicate Arch up close and personal. The entire 90 minute was worth it. Laid before me was an expansive rock amphitheatre from which to take in the awesome scene. Immediately beyond this natural seating area is a large patch of sloping land. At the canyon’s edge sits the arch with views of the landscape beyond.



Delicate Arch
photo by Sterling E. Stevens

Travelers also recognize that it is one of the optimum locations within Arches National Park to receive cellular reception. As I began to unload my camera equipment, a young woman in her early 20s was chatting it up on her mobile phone. “Oh my God, you won’t believe where I am! I’m in front of one of the most photographed places in the world. There are a few guys with cameras here. I’m at like the top of a mountain and can’t believe I get reception here! I can’t get my phone to work anywhere else in the park.” She paused only to respond, “Yeah, I know, right!”

Out of morbid curiosity, I flipped open my own mobile phone and was amused to see I had four bars — the best reception I’d have during my entire travels. The time said it was approximately 3:30 pm. Not wanting to be bothered by random phone calls, I turned my phone off. There were perhaps 10 or 15 people around, including two other photographers with tripods. I was glad to have arrived early because it is inherently difficult to shoot a photograph of the Delicate Arch without people in it. As more people arrived, visitors and their families would pose in front of the arch or sit directly on it. I found myself occasionally frustrated with capturing a clean shot, but there remained several hours to shoot. I discovered a nook with an advantageous viewpoint within the natural amphitheatre and patiently camped.

Over the next few hours, the entire area became teeming with hundreds of visitors, including a slew of photographers with their assorted equipment. The shutterbugs were an amusingly serious bunch whose intent was clearly to capture the exact same pictures that many millions of others photographers before them already took. I began to take more time to observe the people around me rather than the color transformation the arch would soon undergo.

I was exposed to many international visitors and languages over my two day visit to the park. At the Delicate Arch, fellow photographers found it equally frustrating to find a clear capture and many were sharing their internal misery by mumbling and exchanging annoyed glances. An adjacent photographer gesticulated with impatience toward the arch as another group of tourists took snapshots in front of the it. He expressed his irritation in French, a language I had long forgotten since high school, yet what he said translated in any tongue: *"I wish they'd get out of the way, what in the world are they doing?"*

I chuckled and grinned in response, shrugged, then replied, "Yeah, I know." As the photographers became increasingly restless, I remained more interested in the new social dynamic than the natural scenery. Yet more travelers continued to pose for photos in front of the arch, seemingly oblivious to the growing grumbling collective. As the sunset caused deep shadows on the glowing red landscape from the rocks behind us, a group of at least twenty photographers frantically waved towards the people in front of the arch, yelling in at least five different languages, "C'MON GET OUT OF THE WAY — MOVE!" The United Nations could never achieve such levels of international unity. Suddenly aware of the irritated mob of photographers, the other visitors scurried away from the Delicate Arch.

The Amazing Delicate Arch
photo by Sterling E. Stevens

That's when thunderous sounds of applause echoed through the canyons.

Though I considered the experience a humorous testament to the human spirit, I have a few recommendations to photographers when visiting any tourist attraction:

1. Travel during the offseason. The best time to shoot popular tourist attractions is between Labor Day and Memorial Day. Cheaper travel during the nine-month window between September and May is an added bonus! Further, there are some dramatic opportunities in shooting photographs with fall colors, winter weather, or the first hint of spring.
2. Arrive early and stay late. Whether you plan a trip during the summer travel season or not, know what to expect. Be patient and be willing to go early and stay late to avoid crowd interference, not to mention fellow photographers. Besides, the hours surrounding sunrise and sunset typically offer the best natural light to shoot.
3. Venture off the beaten path. You don't have to capture the same photograph everyone else has. Accept the challenge as an artist to portray something you may not have considered before.
4. Visit less touristy areas. Last September, I visited the Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument, a lesser-known national park in New Mexico, and experienced the benefits of shooting rugged landscapes as the only visitor present in the entire park. (You read that correctly, I had the whole place to myself!)
5. Shhh…just shoot! As photographers, the notion the world is our studio does not grant us ownership privilege. We certainly did not create these natural wonders and every person with a camera phone has the same right to enjoy these publicly accessible sights as well-equipped photographers. Perhaps our pictures could take on greater meaning if we humbly took in these awesome sights rather than strutting around with our egos.

Keep up with Sterling at:

sestevens.com

Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument
photo by Sterling E. Stevens

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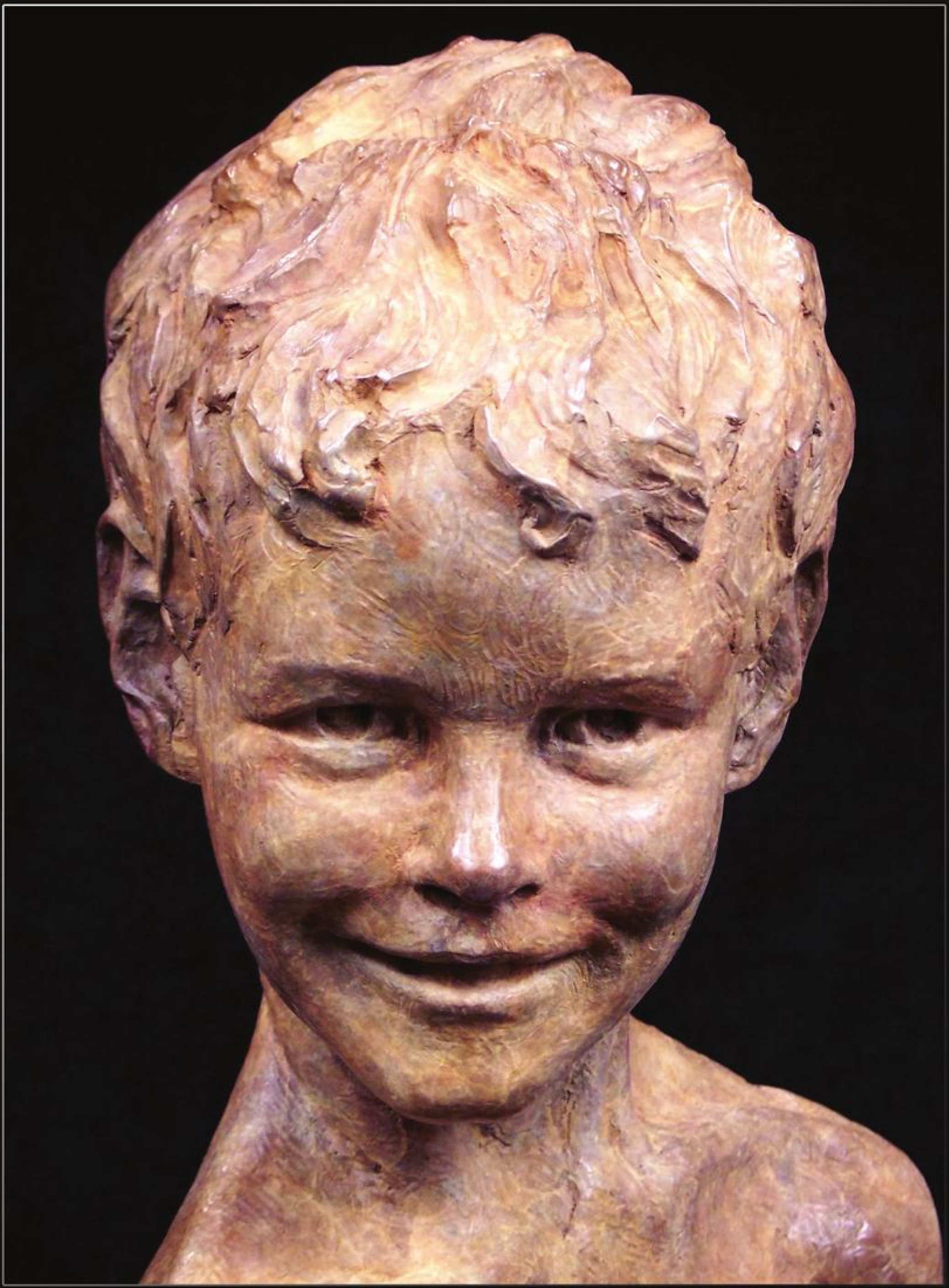

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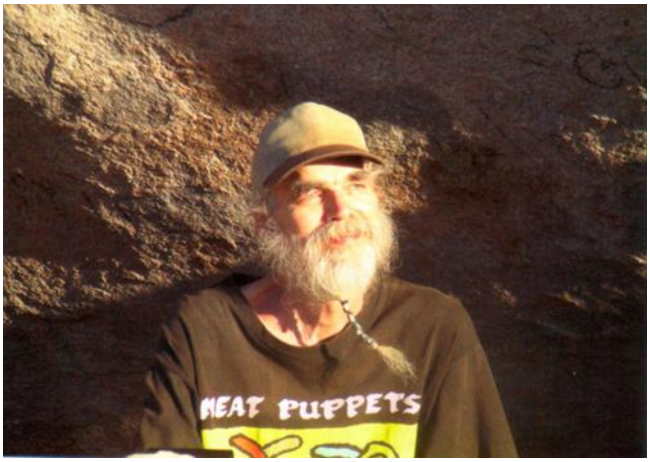
A TRIBUTE TO AN ICON
JERRY LEE WILLIAMS
1948—2010

When I learned about the passing of Jerry Williams, I asked the people who knew him best to write something in his honor. After all, he graciously wrote for *ArtSync* about the history of NC music. (The *Tarheel Troubadours,* published in *ArtSync's 2009,* Summer and Fall issue, both on pg. 52)

I had no idea at the time that a tiny bit of his knowledge would rub off on me through the teachings of George Petros. You see, George learned so much from Jerry (always crediting him when we'd argue during our late night editing sessions) and in turn he passed some of that knowledge down to me. Funny how the cards are shuffled. You never know who you're gonna work with in this business, or how it will affect you. Jerry and I only had one phone call and a letter between us, but I knew him through his work, and of course through my dad and editor, George. —Christine Clemmons



JERRY LEE WILLIAMS, 2010
PHOTO BY STEVEN BLUSH

BY GEORGE PETROS, STEVEN BLUSH, AND DEANNA M. LEHMAN

Jerry Lee Williams, a true Tarheel troubadour, Punk Rock producer, guitarist, writer and editor, died September 18, 2010 at age 61. Complications from liver problems did him in. You never met him yet his influence as a producer impacted your very own ears because he shaped so much of the American post-Punk sound.

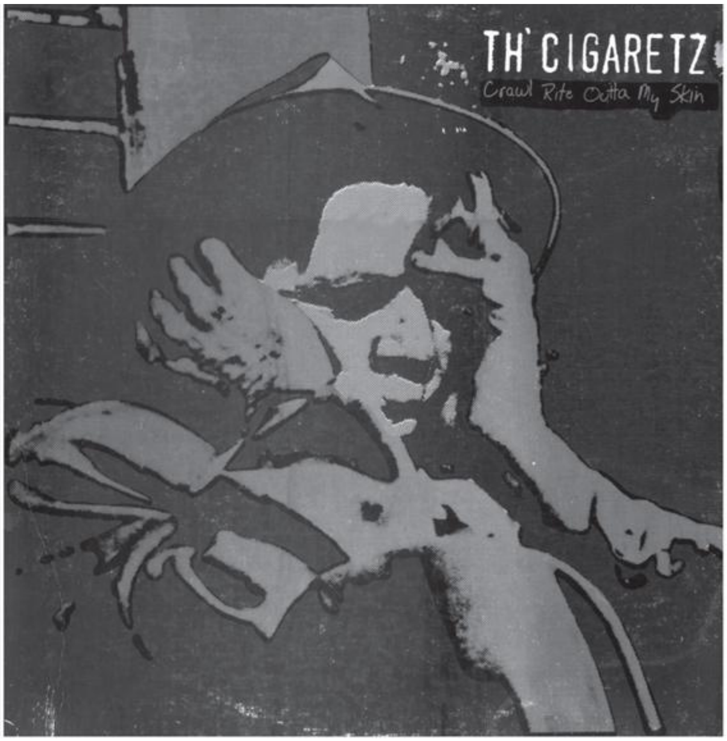
Jerry liked The Beatles, John Coltrane and Jimi Hendrix. He liked Pot and the occasional Magic Mushroom. He liked the Mojave Desert and wound up living out there in his final decade, although he remained a real North Carolina-kinda guy, having been born in Charlotte on September 23, 1948. He attended North Carolina State University before relocating to New York with his band **Th' Cigaretz** in 1977. They broke up after one album, *Crawl Rite Outta My Skin*, on their own aptly-named Cancer Records. JW went on to found a recording studio, 171A, where he worked with Cro-Mags, Beastie Boys, Reagan Youth and Bad Brains, the latter who famously burned him. That bad business precipitated the studio's financial demise, but not before Jerry helped to create a brand-new style of music called Hardcore (it was a super-stripped-down form of Punk). After that, he worked with 3 Teens Kill 4, Velvet Monkeys, Bloodclot, the Hi Sheriffs Of Blue, Purple Geezus and Workdogs. He lived in an East Village apartment where one would find both Famous Artists and local losers soaking up his endless good will. Health problems eventually started to wear him down, so he up and split.

Out there in the Mojave Jerry did a lot of editing and writing (he wrote for *ArtSync*!). In fact, not only did he contribute to and copy-edit my old pal Steven Blush's historic book *American Hardcore*, he edited my very own tome *Art That Kills*. That brings us to me and my involvement with JW. Well, we hung out a lot in New York. We traveled together to Florida a few times, once with his girlfriend Jackie, who went on to be Mistress Jackie, consort of Genesis P-Orridge (sadly she passed away a few years before Jerry). I watched a few Fourth Of July fireworks extravaganzas from his roof. I did a record cover for his band Purple Geezus. I was always learning something from him. I became a vegan, because of him. I even toned down the hate a little bit, because of him. He was what you'd call "spiritual." Easy going but intense. Very smart. Really good at explaining mathematical concepts so that anybody could understand them.

He did lotsa stuff for *Seconds* Magazine, which Blush published and I edited. He wrote reviews. He hacked away at our work. He could always find something wrong with one's writing no matter how air-tight it seemed. After many years his insights rubbed off on me and I began to feel confident as an editor. Thank you Jerry for that. It got to the point where I didn't feel right until ol' JW had a chance to tear my writing to pieces (can you imagine what he woulda done with what you're reading now???). So in conclusion I just want to say that I owe my skills to Jerry Williams who also influenced me in so many other ways that I can't list them all.

R.I.P. Jerry, up there in Rock & Roll heaven, pickin' that guitar, joint hanging out of his mouth, helping some stray cat or down-and-out friend. He did great things that often got credited to someone more aggressive and unscrupulous, while he was busy digging the infinite sounds of our world. But it doesn't matter now because we all know who did what. Jerry Williams did it all.

—George Petros, Brooklyn, 2010


TH' CIGARETZ
Crawl Rite Outta My Skin

Above: Cover of Th' Cigaretz Album *Crawl Rite Outta My Skin*, Raleigh, 1979
Below: Jerry's place in the Mojave Desert
Jerry Williams, George Petros and Deanna M. Lehman
photo by Steven Blush, 2009

A TRUE TARHEEL TROUBADOUR, JERRY LEE WILLIAMS

Jerry Williams was one of the coolest motherfuckers I ever met. Not just cuz my pals in Raleigh still talk about his outrageous 1977-79 Punk band **Th' Cigaretz** (he was interviewed for an NC Punk History feature in *ArtSync* #1 by yours truly). Not just cuz he basically started the New York Hardcore scene with his 1980-1982 Avenue A slum practice space called 171A, where he nurtured and produced seminal bands like the Bad Brains, Beastie Boys and Cro-Mags. Not just cuz he was the deepest, coolest, smartest, most spiritual punker that ever walked the planet. Not just cuz he defied all odds: he flourished 20 years more than the medical experts predicted, in his self-imposed exile in the Mojave Desert, living on a strict vegan-weed diet. Not just cuz he starred in my *American Hardcore* documentary film and edited all my books and taught me to become the best damn Rock writer out there. He was cool cuz his loss was felt so deeply by so many, including untold numbers moved to tears, including some who hadn't communicated with the man in years.

A handful of folks helped care for JW in his latter days, including myself and George Petros and the State of CA. I was lucky enough to hang out with him for 24 hours just three weeks prior to his demise. It was easy to see that the 61-year-old wasn't doing well — nothing but skin 'n bones 'n bud. I know his liver enzyme readings were off the charts. With his peppery dreads under his cap and his Meat Puppets t-shirt, he bravely faced the day with Paul Rachman, Tony Mann and me as we smoked him out amongst the Joshua Trees. A funny side is that I came bearing the gift of a refurbished iBook G4, which we tried in vain to teach the old coot how to use. His last letter was to Tony, its final line a P.S. asking if the Mac "comes with an owner's manual."

I know he did not die alone, but rather with his dear friend Ted Rosenthal at his side. Ted placed a bud on JW's tongue, closed his mouth and held his hand as he passed into the great beyond. And for some reason I feel JW knew the significance of holding on until September 18, 2010, the 40th anniversary of the death of his lifelong hero Jimi Hendrix. Jerry Williams lived life his own way and went out on his own terms. Isn't that what it's really all about?

—Steven Blush, New York 2010

THREE ROCK STAR WRITERS CRUISING THE STREETS OF L.A.
STEVEN BLUSH, DEANNA M. LEHMAN AND GEORGE PETROS

R.I.P., JERRY LEE WILLIAMS

I didn’t know Jerry Lee Williams when he played with **Th’ Cigaretz**, or produced bands from the gritty infamous 171A location in NYC. I met Jerry on a mind-bending California trip with George Petros and Steve Blush. Together we tumbled through the parched pastel playgrounds of Yucca Valley, the stiff pricks of cactus poking streams of sun-drenched sky, and windmills spinning like the spurs of titan cowboys buried headfirst in sandy solitude. We scaled the surfaces of Skull Rock and lingered long in the cactus labyrinths at the Chullo Garden, growing closer through conversation and companionship. Jerry, with his gentle smile and distant dreaming, is bonded by my molecular memory with the desert’s otherworldly ambiance of bloodless blossoms and flame-fiery skyscapes edged with the purple promise of night.

Jerry had nine cats he catered to, chefing up fresh chickens for them daily while he himself mostly ate peanut butter and romaine lettuce sandwiches on unsprouted bread. We ate these together, picnicking outside in savage sun-splashed splendor as Jerry’s cats curled contentedly in shadowed contours. I couldn’t help but admire Jerry’s independence and sure-sighted serenity. By visit’s end, I viewed Jerry as a cross between a Jedi knight and the hermit depicted on the album cover of *Led Zeppelin IV*.

Over the years, we talked and worked together editing Steve Blush’s *American Hardcore* and *New York Rock* books. Jerry was the very best of editors, the only editor both Steve and George answered to professionally. I learned much from working with him. We mailed each other music CD’s and holiday cards. Jerry gave me advice about self acceptance, on occasion. Two catchphrases from these discussions were “surrender to yourself” and “let your freak flag fly.” In a world where attempted friendships often feel about as barren and emotionally insincere as a mass e-mailed suicide threat, Jerry’s friendship was a refreshing experience.

I knew Jerry was chronically ill. I knew his health was touch and go. I knew, but hoped death would overlook him a couple decades more. I learned from Steve that he’d been hospitalized and was dying. Luckily, we had a chance to say goodbye over the phone. He’d stopped eating and drinking and wouldn’t let himself be medicated when he realized the end was inevitable. I thanked him for all he taught me and the fun times we’d had. I told him I loved him and tried to memorize his voice, the exact way he said my name. Jerry was gracious and said “the pleasure was all mine.” He passed away a few days later, making sure his cats were provided for in his will. Jerry Lee Williams was a musician, producer, roadie, animal lover, writer, editor and beloved friend. He lived and died in uncompromising independence and clarity. Thank you for the gift of you, Jerry. I’ll never forget.

—Deanna M. Lehman

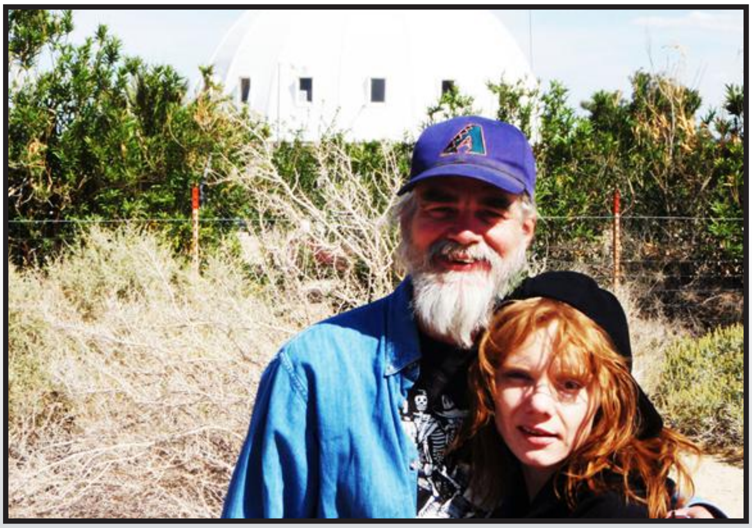
THE WRITERS:

GEORGE PETROS
georgepetros.com

STEVEN BLUSH
stevenblush.com

DEANNA M. LEHMAN
deannalehman.com

To read Jerry William’s *Tarheel Troubadour* pieces, please visit:
artsyncmag.com

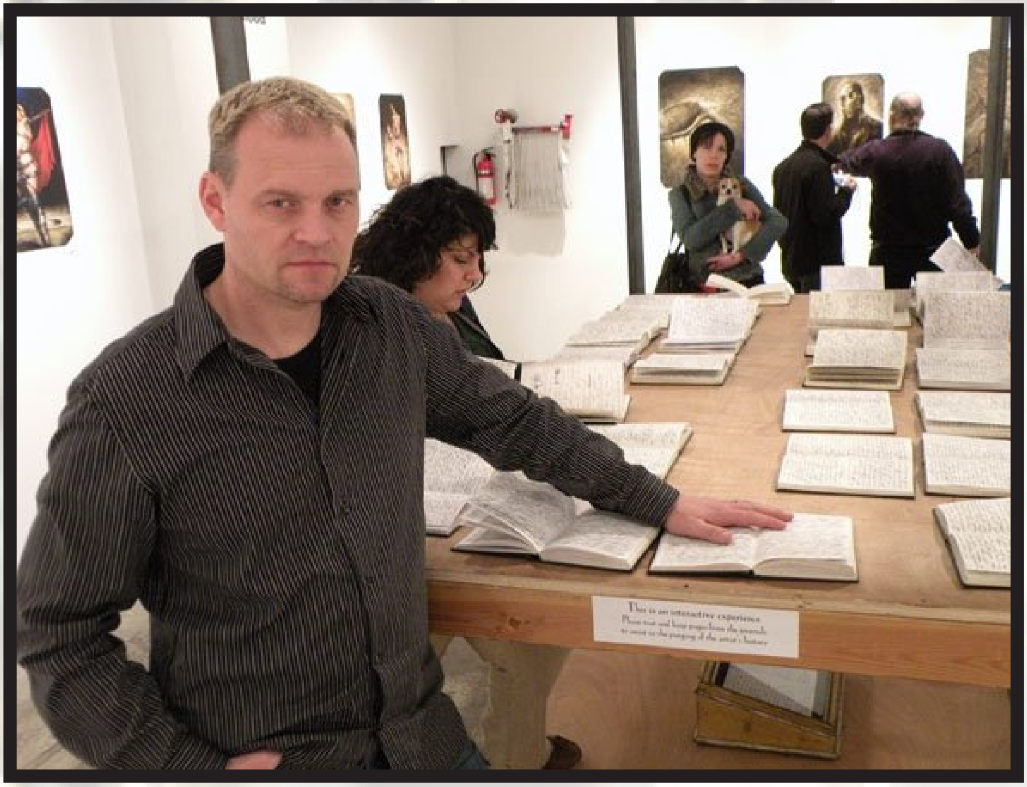


JERRY WILLIAMS AND DEANNA M. LEHMAN
THE MOJAVE DESERT IN 2009
PHOTO BY STEVEN BLUSH, 2009

John U. Abrahamson

FLESH AND BLOOD—THE REBIRTH

Interview by Christine Clemmons



John U. Abrahamson,
Flesh And Blood solo exhibtion held at Bert Green Fine Art, Los Angeles, CA
photo by Robin Perine

This is a story about coping and surviving, and not just the kind that shelters us from our past, but also the handling of that raw sinister voice we all hear from time to time, telling us to do things we know we shouldn't. Listening to John U. Abrahamson's story and discovering his pieces leaves me with sadness, but also a new appreciation for the human spirit. His will to overcome the constant reminders that linger in his heart proves that it isn't always as it looks. John is a well-mannered man with respect for others…a real sweetheart, but then you view his striking, limbless figures, and you might wonder what kind of monster creates such horrific bodies of work. As I type this, I can almost hear the whispering of bystanders peering at his *Flesh And Blood* series. The things they say and the thoughts they keep to themselves…John wouldn't be surprised, after all he's lived it. Just try to imagine the uneasy feelings you might be digesting while viewing his work, now transfer that to him times a million. Yes, this is an artist who has lived what he creates.

There are things we need or should have in our life, you know, basic emotional and human rights. Of course we don't always get the love our spirit longs for, so how do we compensate when those needs aren't met? I guess we all behave differently, but maybe some of us turn to crime, while others perform mini exorcisms in hopes of letting some light in. It's evident to me that John has performed many of these rituals, and will probably continue to do so in some form. After the abandonment by his mother, and many other scabbed over traumas, he is reborn, but not without the painful surrender of his innermost trusted voice. Literally shedding his flesh and bleeding out the toxins that chained him to a life of pain, he purged. So without further ado, I bring the human sacrifice that lives to tell a small part of his story, John U. Abrahamson.

ArtSync: Do you know when you came into your style?

Abrahamson: Every series has been different — has its own style. I would say my fist solo show at the John Thomas Gallery in Santa Monica, CA — I started to pull out the darker aspects that I was trying to portray. There was a lot of experimentation. I started applying all kinds of textures and so forth. It was in the early 90's and the series is titled *Theater Of The Absurd*. One of the problems with my " education" was my interest in art developed all of a sudden — it just happened. It was pretty much an outlet for my mother's abandonment. I needed expression for that. A couple of years after she left, I started to pick up drawing. It consumed me. I basically drew on anything that was in front of me. I started thinking that maybe I wanted to do something with it, so I brought my collection of sketches to the director of the art department at my high school. He immediately put me into independent studies. I didn't know anything about art — not what the color wheel was for…I didn't even know anything about oil or acrylic paints, and he wasn't about to teach me. He just said buy some paints and do 10 paintings by the end of the semester, and we'll put them up for a show and you'll be graded on your completion of the series. It was incredibly frustrating. I didn't know where to begin, so I took out some books from the library on Rembrandt, Picasso, Leonardo da Vinci…you know, the ones you think you should read.

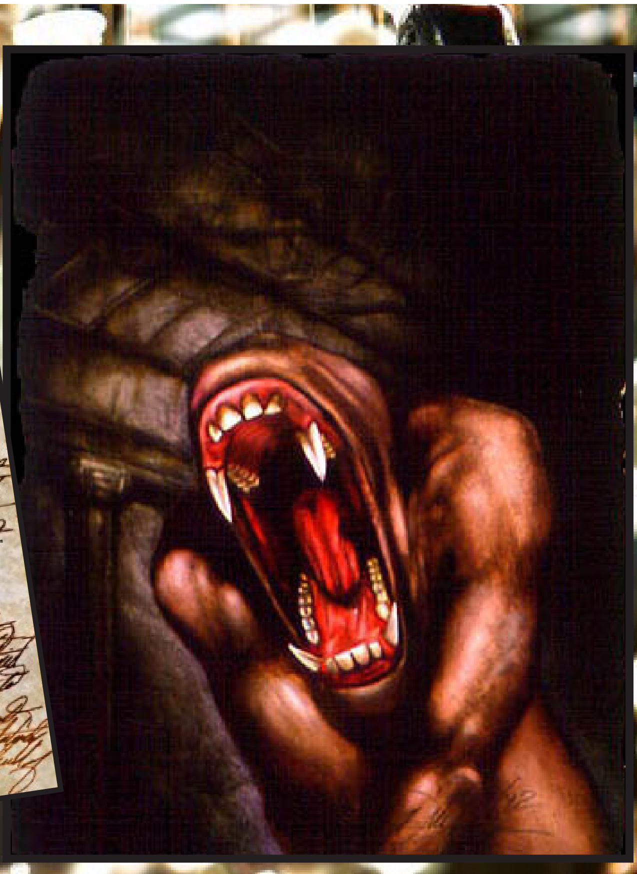
ArtSync: Of course. Those are great ones to start with.

Abrahamson: It was a good education. I learned a lot about the techniques of layering and it's what I do in my paintings today. I don't know if it's the proper way to do it, but it's worked for me.

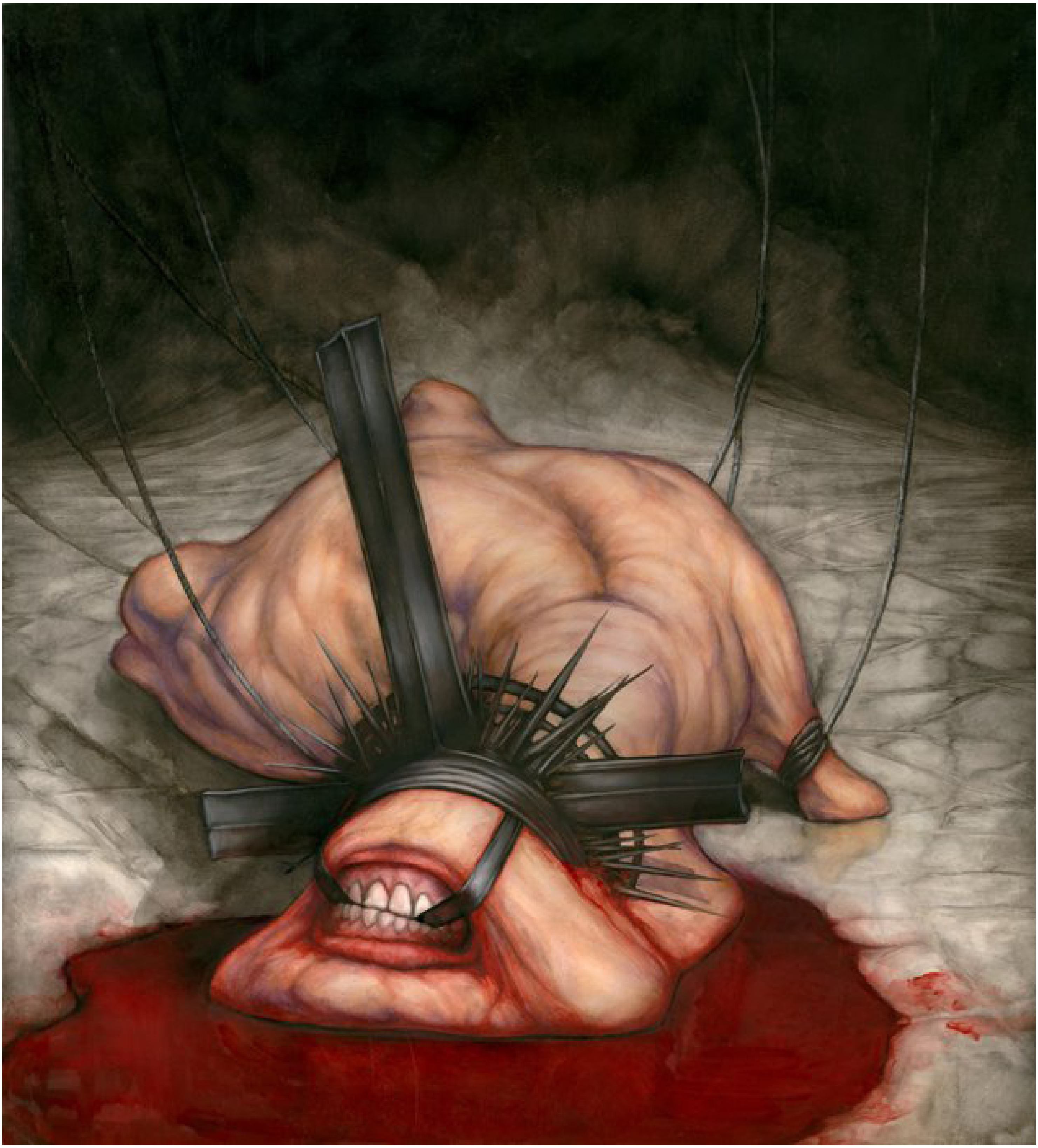
ArtSync: Do you have a favorite artist? I mean, who inspires you?

Abrahamson: I think H.R. Giger was one the most influential artist as far as him being able to combine horrific imaginary, originality, sexual tones and blending all that together into his incredibly rich style. That influence was probably the cornerstone to my self-education. Anyway, once I knew I wanted to be an artist, I put together a portfolio and presented it to the Art Institute of Chicago and they accepted me. I thought finally, someone will teach me something, but no one wanted too. They thought I should know this stuff by now, you know, I'm in college — I should know the basics. So it was a real struggle, and I think that was one of the reasons it was so disappointing to me, but it made me follow my own course. In fact, my education started at the train station and continued all the way to class. I was observing all the wonderful architecture in Chicago. Observing the people and my surroundings, which was a much better education than I ever got in school.

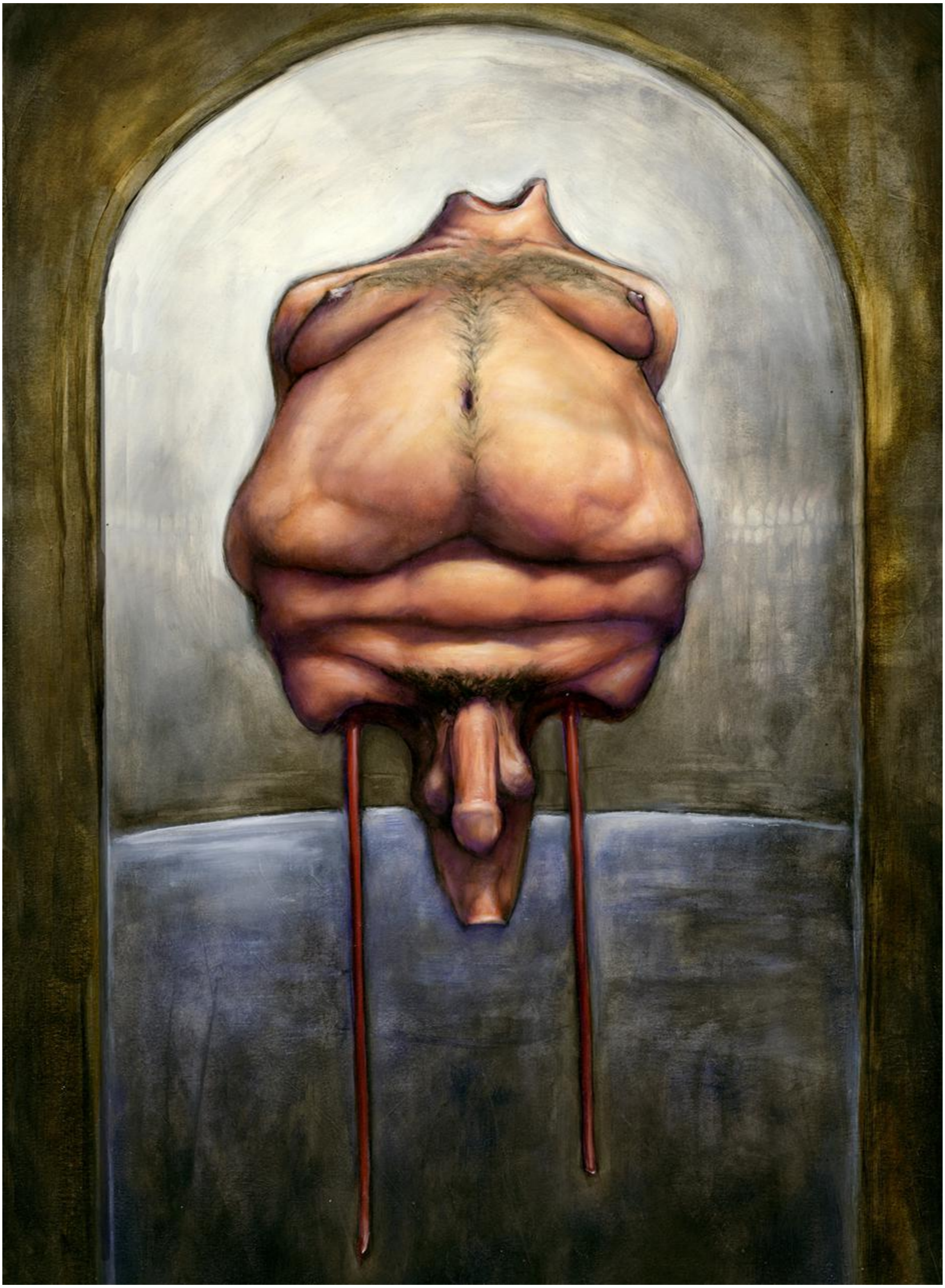
Pages from John's journal, part of the *Flesh and Blood* Exhibition
photo's by Robin Perine



Self Portrait
22 X 30 inches, oils on gessoed print paper



As Lamb To Slaughter
17 X 22 inches, oils on gessoed print paper



Bathroom
15 X 22 inches, oils on gessoed print paper

ArtSync: When did your mother leave?

Abrahamson: Well, I was 7 and my sister was 5. My mother left my father, sister and I for another man. We stayed in touch for about a year after she left, but then all contact stopped. No one ever spoke of her, and well, she just basically disappeared out of our lives. I didn't know if she was alive or dead for 11 years. Come to find out, she lived about 20 minutes away the whole time. My sister and I got in touch with her for a little bit, but I was very skeptical. The whole thing was extremely hurtful. I was very attached to her when I was younger. That was probably one of the most traumatic experiences of my life. I think it spurred my need for expression.

ArtSync: How did you handle it early on.

Abrahamson: We lived in a 2 story modest home in Brookfield, IL which is where I grew up. I boarded up all the windows in the upper portion of the house and I built myself a coffin to sleep in. That was in the eighth grade. I painted all the walls grey, and drew stones over the entire wall with a black sharpie. My father has always been supportive no matter what kind of bizarre thing I involve myself in. I had a year-round haunted house in the basement of our home. My dad was like, just tell me what you need and we'll go to the hardware store and get the materials. His support is probably what allowed me to become the artist that I am. My father was the nurturer and the disciplinarian. I think it's made me a better father too, by the way.

ArtSync: This is a very depressing story, John. I appreciate your honesty.

Abrahamson: Yeah, I'm an open book. People wonder why I have a tendency to harp on the darker aspects of the psyche. It's because I'm still dealing with all that. There hasn't been a single series of work that I didn't devote one or two pieces on the subject to my mother. I reached out to her again, because she has a grandson now. Who am I to step in between my son's relationship with his grandmother? I got a letter back. That was about the extent of it.

ArtSync: So she's just closed off to it then?

Abrahamson: Yes. The times I have visited her I saw she was really into crafts. That's what she does, and down in her basement where she makes all of her crafts, she has these extremely elaborate miniature houses. They are incredibly detailed. She made a bar that represented my sister. My sister was a bartender most of her life — she's dead now.

ArtSync: Your sister?

Abrahamson: Yes, she died about 8 or 9 years ago. She was on her third DUI and she jumped on a motorcycle after drinking — hit a telephone pole…and died. Anyway, my mother made the bar for my sister, and for me she designed this elaborate studio. She pulled some images of my work off the web and shrunk them down, framed them and made this wonderfully detailed studio that she devoted to me. I think she was living through her models. She put all this time and effort into these miniatures instead of picking up the phone or visiting. It made me even more angry. I don't know why, it just did.

ArtSync: Well, because you're human. It certainly does put your work into perspective.

Abrahamson: The exhibition that I referred to earlier *The Theater Of The Absurd* was almost exclusively dealing with the abandonment issue I had with my mother. I was at my opening and there were two women looking at one of the paintings (neither of them knew who I was. I hadn't really been introduced to anyone yet), and I overheard the one say to the other, "Oh this is a masochistic exhibition." I approached them and I explained what my thinking had been when I was producing these works. You don't paint images of a woman hanging upside down on meat hooks with her arms and head cut off and not expect some reaction…right?

ArtSync: Right.

Abrahamson: There was a lot of anger, and it showed in the pieces. By the time I was done explaining, they understood and there was more empathy.

ArtSync: Did you struggle with creating darker works and maintaining your relationship with your father, and the rest of your family and friends?

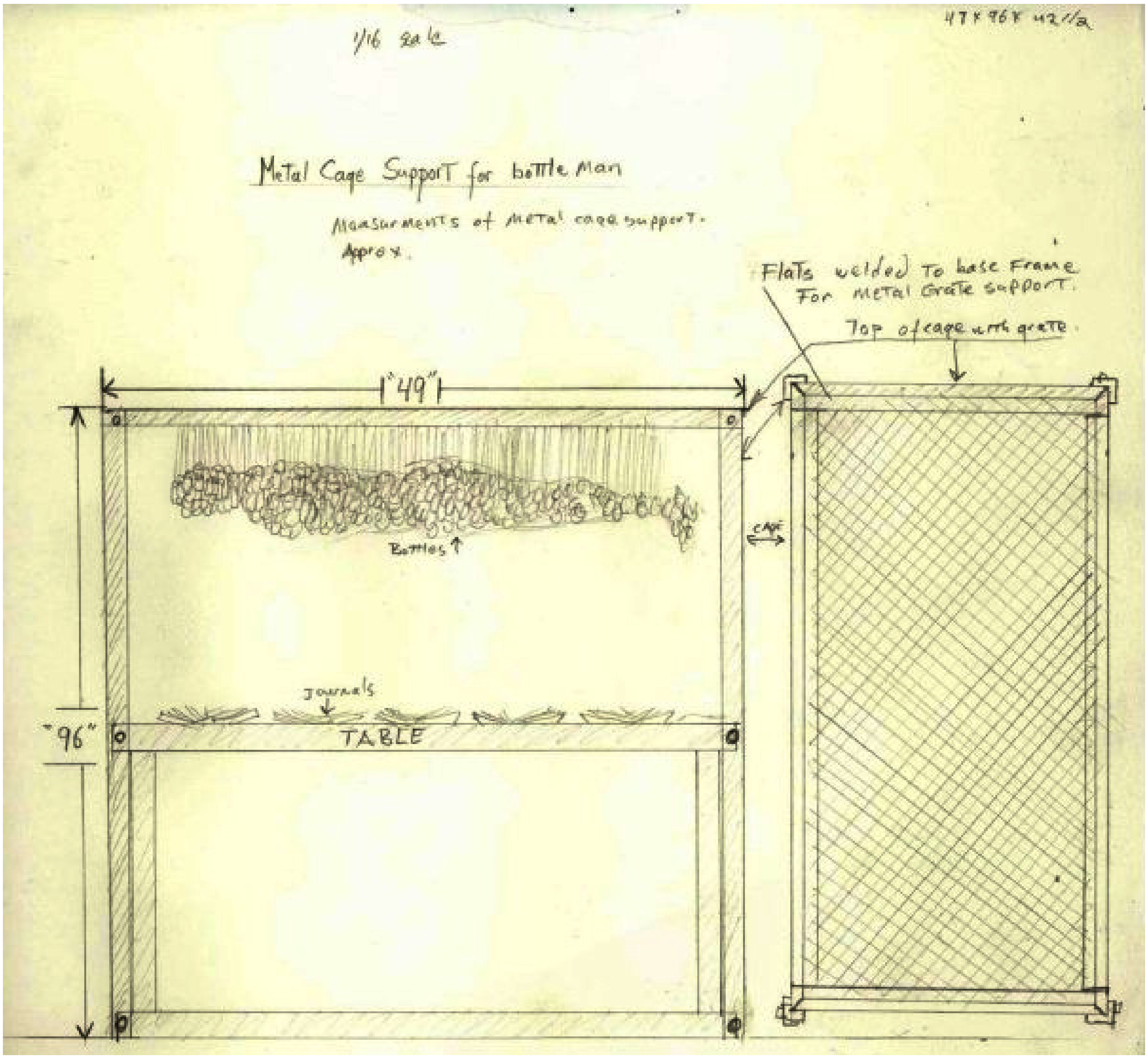
Abrahamson: I've been absolutely shocked at how accepting people have been and it's not just family, it's friends too. Leading up to my last exhibition, *Flesh And Blood*, I had to have my blood drawn a lot and I shaved flesh from my body…enough for 660 vial's of actual flesh and blood to make up the installation piece. That being said, I was part of my sons pre-school during the day and at night drawing blood or shaving flesh and showing up at my sons school all pasty white — kind of anemic. And the other parents would ask, "What kind of art do you do?" And I was like, oh man I don't want to get black-balled out of here when they find me out. But I gave them my website, and they later said, you know it's not our cup of tea, but technically very well done. So everyone seemed very interested and no negativity whatsoever.

ArtSync: Here's what really happened John. Those moms rallied together and decided they were all too terrified at what they had seen on your website, that it was better to keep their mouths shut and just be nice…huh?

Abrahamson: [*Laughs*] Actually I was very involved and worked hard and that goes a very long way with school moms. They appreciated my involvement and they saw how I was with my son. I think my friends were all surprised to find out I was having a kid, but then they see me with him, and they know it's all ok. After a while people just get use to it. I mean, I was sleeping in a coffin in the 8th grade, so that sort of set the tone.

ArtSync: Ok, I wanna go back to the blood. What were you thinking?

Abrahamson: I've used blood throughout the years in my work. I always kept an empty vial and a funnel in my studio at all times, especially when I was woodworking. Of course, there were always accidents, and I didn't want to waste it — I'd put it in the bottle, cork and seal it. I have some that are over ten years old. It's dark in color, like a burgundy, but it remains liquid for as long as that bottle is sealed. I should backtrack a little bit. I hadn't painted in a long time. There was a divorce, then a marriage, and the birth of my son that kept me from persuing art fulltime. So there was a ten year spread between my last show, *Flesh And Blood,* and the one before that. In the very beginning, when I was preparing for the show I had some test pieces I was showing the gallery director. He came to visit my studio. I had a few vials of blood and also a little vial of skin, plus about 30 of my journals that I wanted to somehow incorporate into the show. He asked what I was planning to do with the journals and I said, I was thinking that I could have them there, you know, be completely open and have them available for reading. And he asked if I was gonna sell them and I said, yes I want to purge. And he said I was doing it half-ass, and that I might sell one or two, but if I was really looking to purge, I needed to rip them up and destroy them. I looked him right in the eye and said, you are so right. Within about an hours time I conceived of using the bottles of blood and skin in the form of a full size human to hover over the journals, and then people could tear out pages and take them home with them.

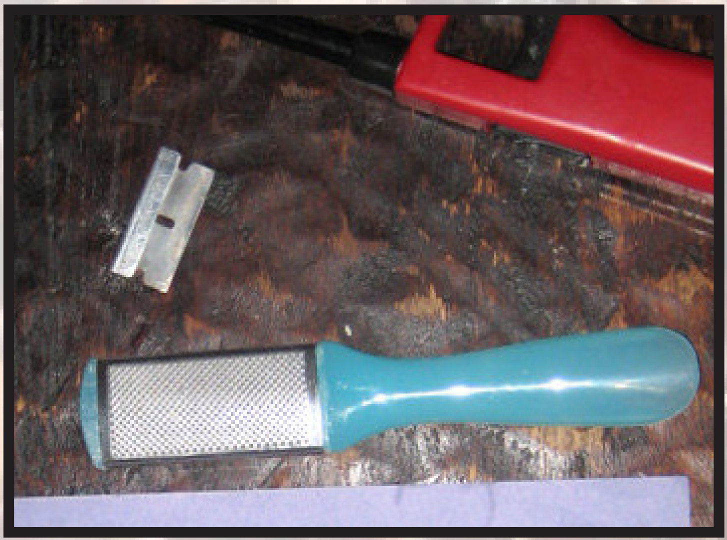

1/16 scale
47 x 96 x 42 1/2
Metal Cage Support for bottle Man
Measurements of metal cage support. Approx.
Flats welded To base Frame For Metal Grate support.
Top of cage with grate
49"
Bottles
cage
Journals
TABLE
96"

Draft of full sized man hovering over John's journals for the *Flesh And Blood* exhibtion

ArtSync: I imagine that's a lot of blood.

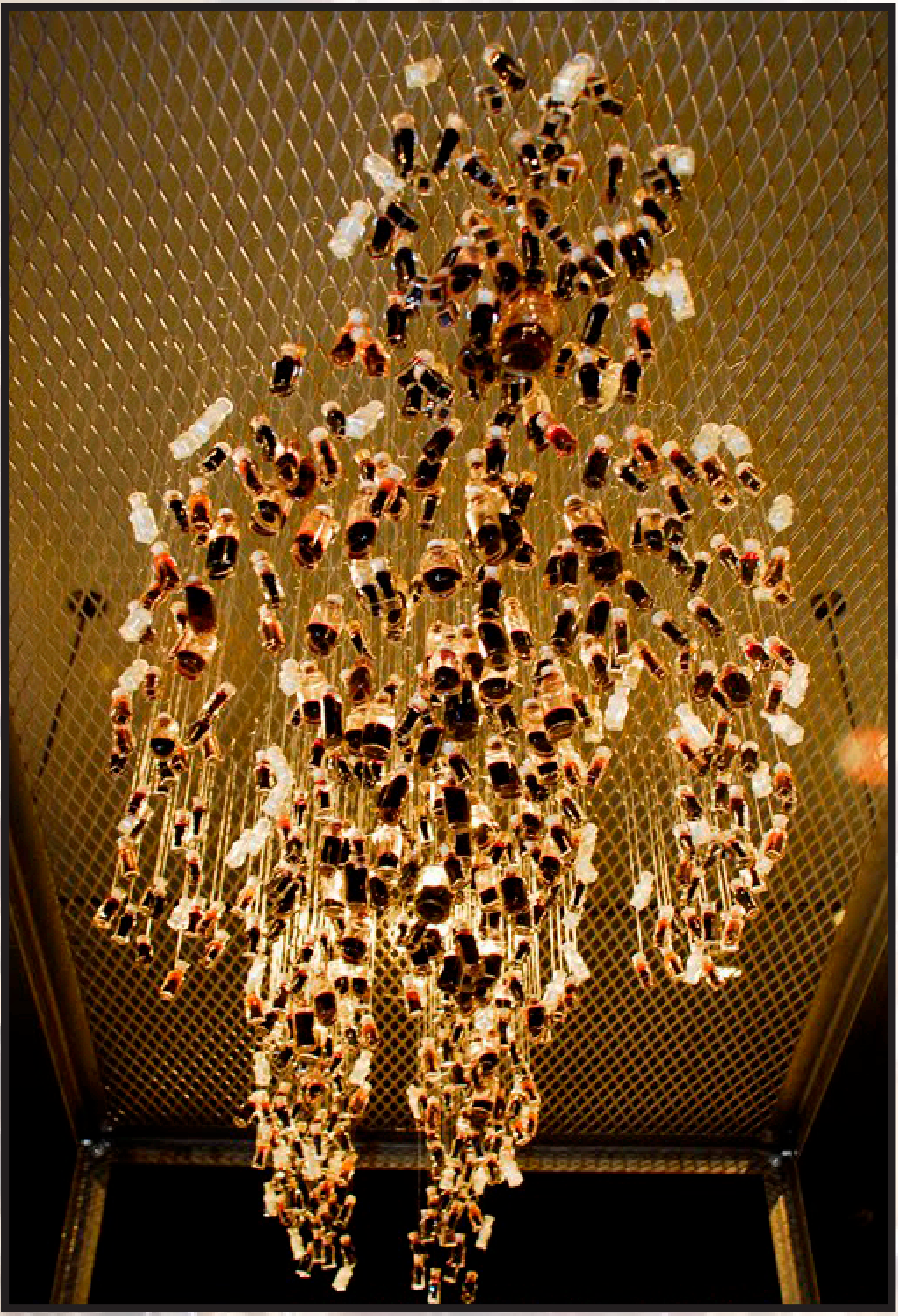
Abrahamson: Yeah. It wasn't until a couple of months down the road that I started to do the math, which is hard to do actually, but I figured out the volume of each bottle and how much space would be around it, and I thought this is gonna take like a 1000 vials. At the time, no one was doing the blood drawing for me. I contacted every single blood bank and lab and explained what I was doing. No one would touch it. I was absolutely beside myself, because time was ticking away and I needed the blood for this massive installation. The steel beams had been constructed and things were in place, I just needed a ton of my own blood. I tried cutting, but I just couldn't do it. So out of desperation I put a couple things out there on craigslist, and within a week I had found the gentlemen that ended up doing it for me. I have videos on line if you're interested in what the process was. I would go to his apartment and he'd have everything laid out and ready. It was all very professional, and he would draw about 8 to 10 of these large syringes of my blood and then right there, I would put it into the bottles and cap them. I would take them home and my son would help me put the sealing wax over top, and then we'd string them up with fishing line so I could attach them to the metal structure. I didn't end up with a 1000, I guess around 660. It ended up being enough. I would have liked more, but we just ran out of time. We were pushing so hard that I was becoming anemic. You know, light headed — it just wasn't good. I was basically told to stop.

The process — very organized and sterile.
Also an example of one of the large syringes John endured many times over, while preparing for his *Flesh And Blood* exhibtion



The tools John used to shave his flesh off — filling at least 100 small bottles, like the ones in the image below.

Flesh And Blood Vials



Installation piece — full size man using vials of John's own flesh and blood.
The solo exhibtion, *Flesh And Blood* was held at Bert Green Fine Art in Los Angeles, CA.
photo by Robin Perine

ArtSync: There's something very intimate about that, because you're giving flesh and blood…literally. I mean the spiritual end of what it means to give of yourself in the physical, if that makes sense. Where did it take you?

Abrahamson: Well it's gonna sound strange and I don't know how it will be received, but I miss it. It brought me so in touch with my own body. It wasn't really a masochistic thing, but I did feel euphoric after the blood drawings. I don't know if it was just the loss of blood or if it was that I was doing something intensely meaningful. I couldn't imagine giving of myself more outside of losing a limb. I mean the flesh alone, I guess about a 100 vials of skin, was intense. I used one of those graters and I just did it all over my body, legs and arms to the point where I'd bleed. My wife was beside herself. It was like communion for me. I was really giving of myself the best I knew how. I don't know if this is making any sense.

ArtSync: It does. When you first started talking about it was all very technical and that part is important, but the reasoning and the longing to bring this installation to life is the whole point of the interview. Please go on.

Abrahamson: Right. The spiritual connection it had for me and how I literally put myself into the work is hard to express. I pushed myself so far, like I was killing myself. In the beginning I thought of it as a false suicide. I thought I can't kill myself, but this is as close as I can come. To destroy all my journals and give of my blood to the point of compromising my heath, well, I honestly thought that would be the natural conclusion of a show, death. As it progressed it became much more spiritual.

ArtSync: So John, this was like a rebirth for you?

Abrahamson: Yes. Painting was always church to me. It was my communion over the years. So yeah, this was a higher new understanding for me. I felt in harmony with my body. It's really weird, because after it was over, my arms actually ached for the blood draw. I could feel it, I don't know, maybe because I had gotten use to it.

ArtSync: When did it click, you know the whole "This is who I am…deal with it?"

Abrahamson: As a matter of fact, in this last show *Flesh And Blood,* that was so in front of me all the time. For example, I didn't have an income, I have a son, a wife that works and I was concentrating a lot on having my blood draws plus painting, and well, I persevered. A lot of people felt I was being irresponsible and that I should be doing other things, but I said no, this is something I should be doing. It's something I need to do — have to do. And of course my wife and I had terrible fights about it. I didn't know if our marriage would survive, yet I kept doing it. I felt it was that important. I knew if I did not complete the show I'd never be able to look at myself the same…never again. I really felt it was important for me to dispose of those journals, start fresh…a new beginning. It was in the face of great adversity from a lot of fronts. My wife was very concerned on many levels.

ArtSync: The word selfish comes to mind.

Abrahamson: Yeah, I'm kind of losing track of your original question.

ArtSync: Not really. I was going to touch a bit on that too. I mean it's tough when you have to share yourself with others. There's the guilt of making sure everyone's needs are met, but where's the separation?

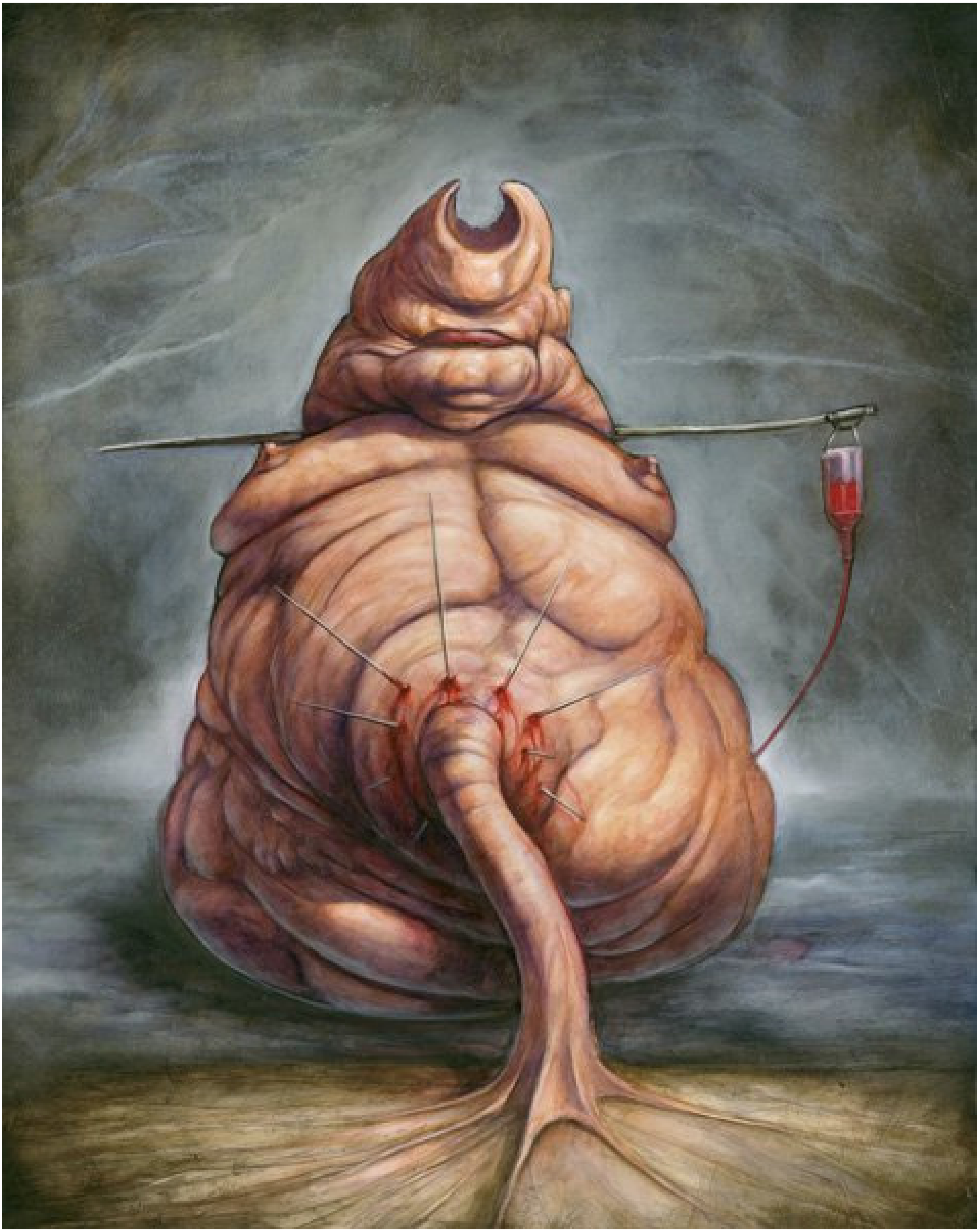
Abrahamson: Right. I said to my wife, if I do not do this, you will lose the man you married. And I didn't mean that I would leave, I meant that I would no longer exist. I would never be that same person and it could never be undone. It's that failure of self, and it would eat away at me like a cancer. You know, looking back maybe it was selfish. I have guilt. Money was really tight and she was looking out for our son. It doesn't get more basic than that. I can totally appreciate a mothers concern. But I knew in my heart of hearts that I needed to continue. I just couldn't explain it to her properly. It was hard. She was extremely conflicted. My wife is also an artist — a fabric designer. She's completely different from me in her approach, but very talented and passionate — so am I. So our fights are passionate as well. [Laughs] She was supportive, but there were triggers. She got it. She understood a lot of it and I understood her end. I was being protective over my project and she was being protective over the household. We always had the back and forth of being helpful and supportive and then getting into these huge arguments. But the end result — I was able to do it, complete it. Gosh, thinking back on it, there were great moments of support. She even said, there aren't too many wives who would be so understanding of their husbands staying home and getting their blood drawn, and you know….

ArtSync: Are you kidding me? She had you by the you-know-what. This is not an argument a wife could lose. At least not from that end of it. You're a very lucky man.

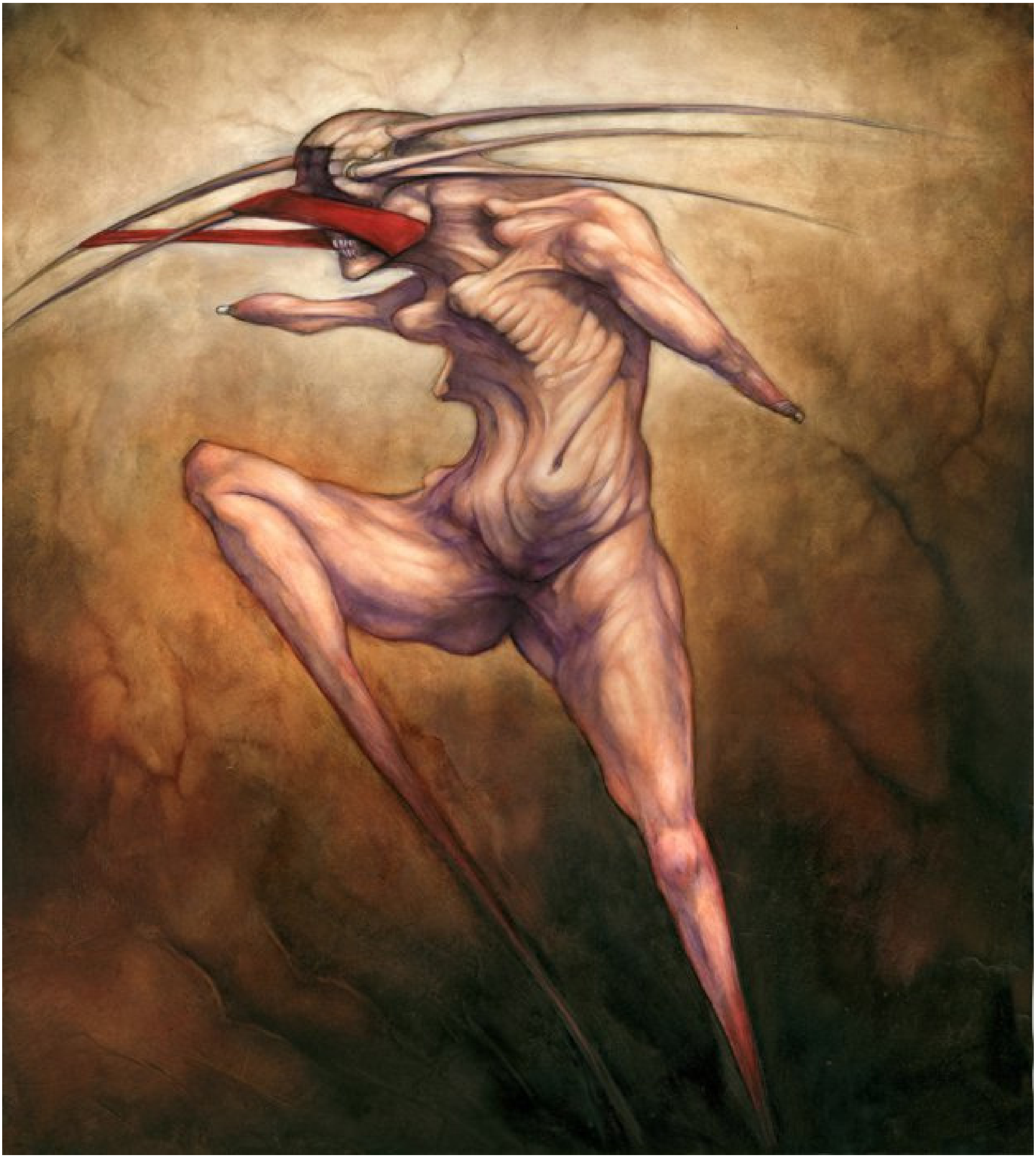
Abrahamson: Yes I am.

ArtSync: But you made it through…right?

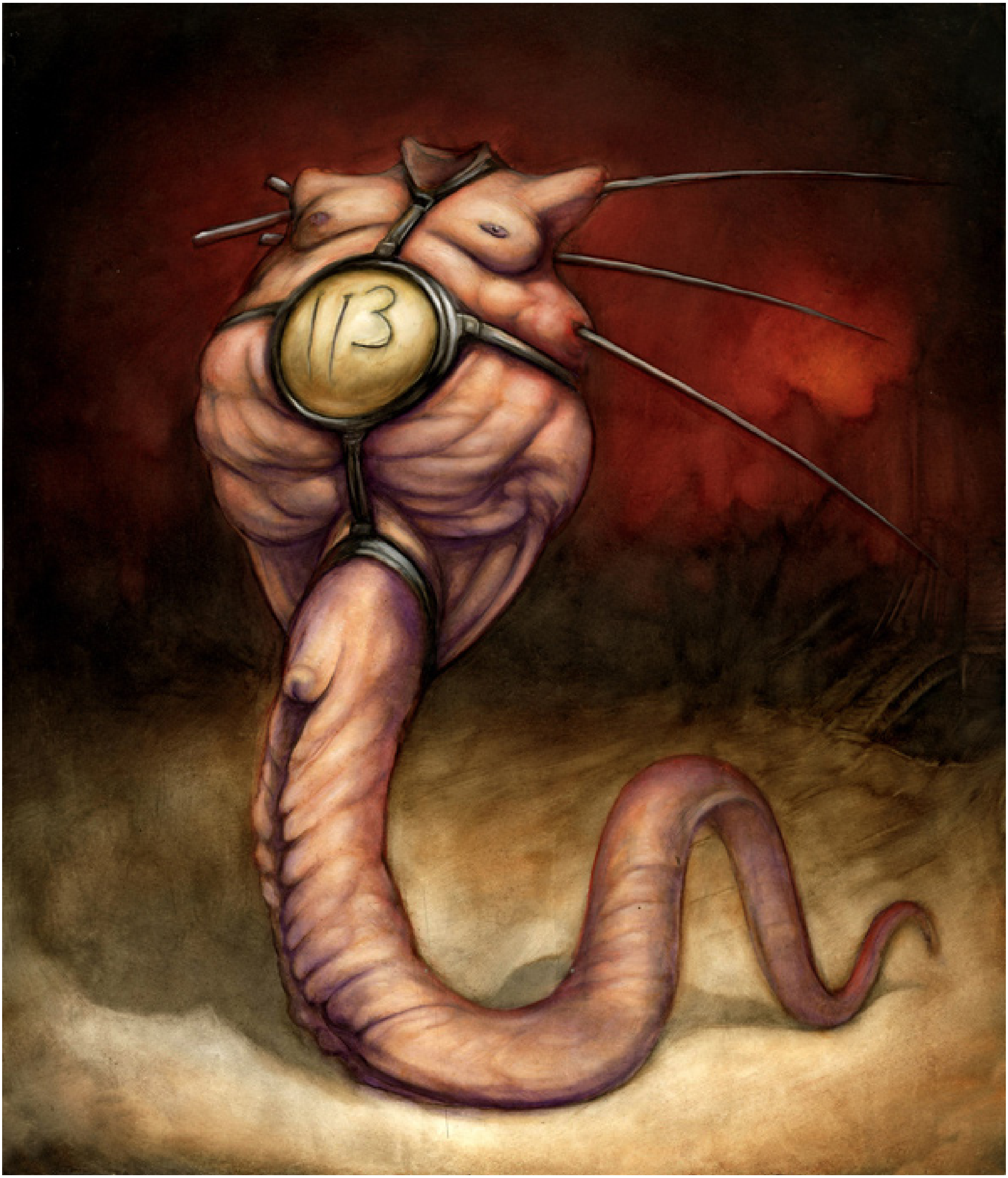
Abrahamson: I think the last show was the darkest it's ever been. I don't know if anybody would agree with me or not, but I believe it was the most successful series for me, because it was the ugliest. There was also the ugliness looking back at me in the mirror — watching myself deteriorate. That was difficult. It was like an exorcism and I just have to get it out.



Mother Issues , 16 X 20 inches, oils on wood panel



Totentanz
20 X 22 1/2 inches, oils on gessoed print paper



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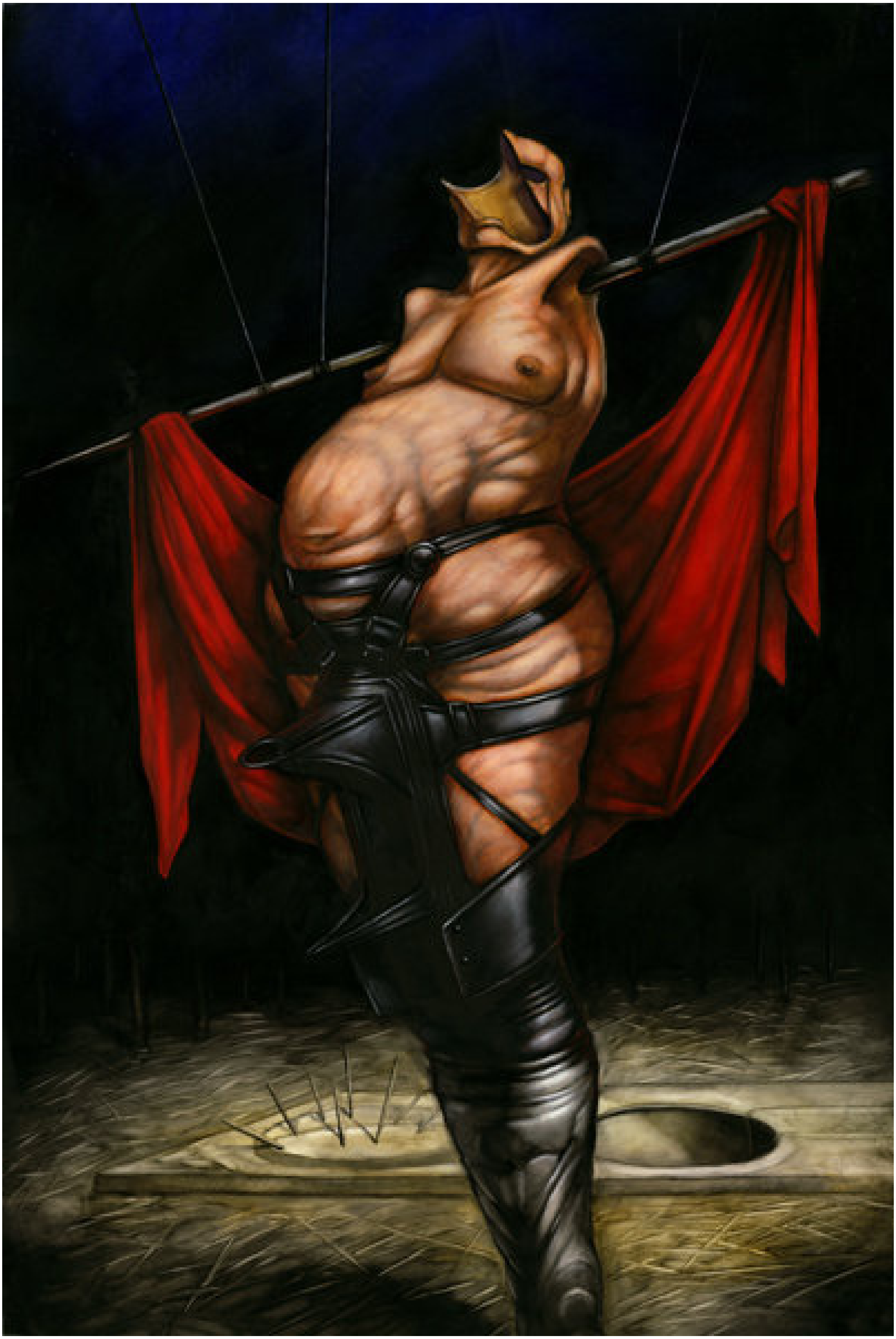
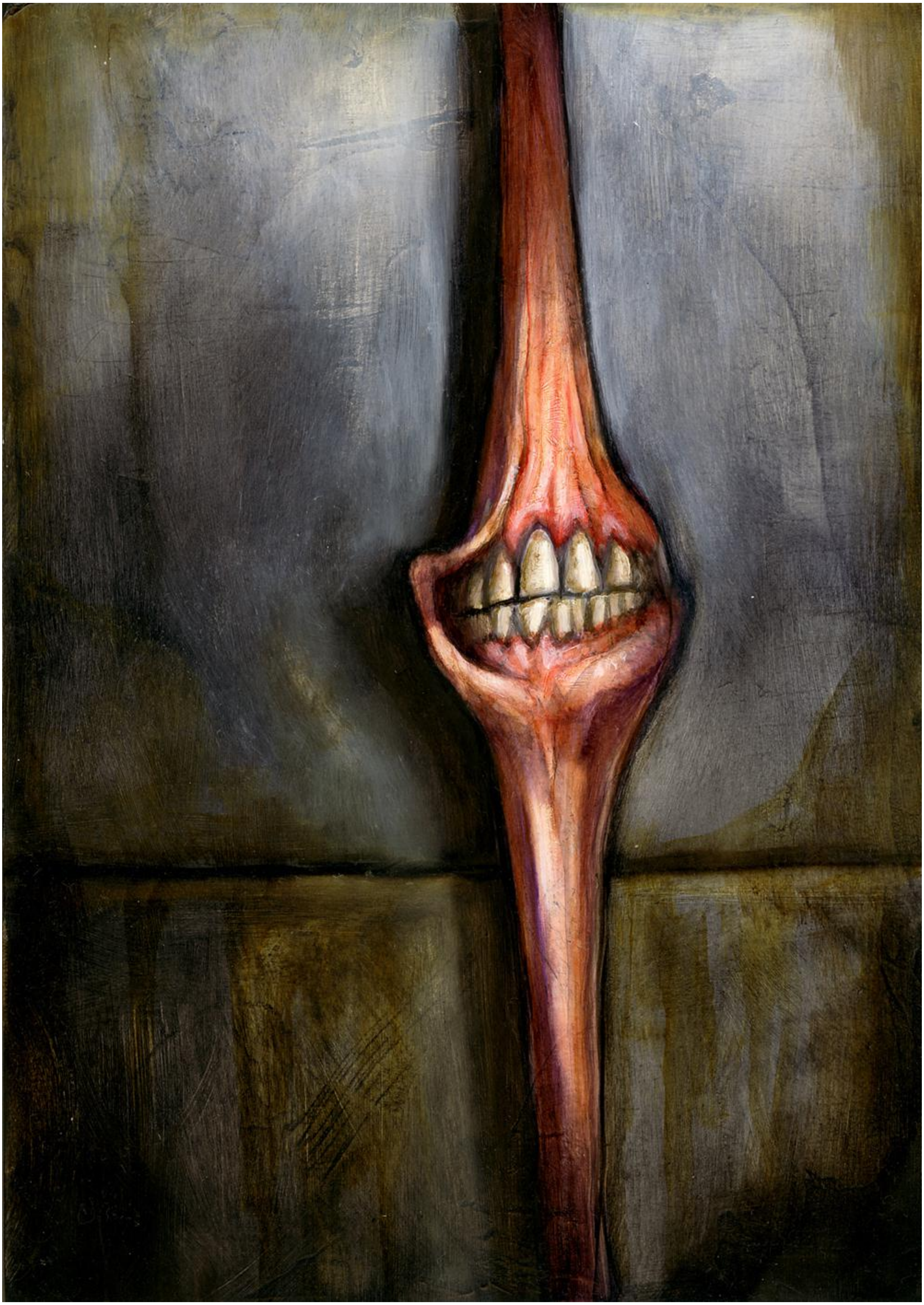
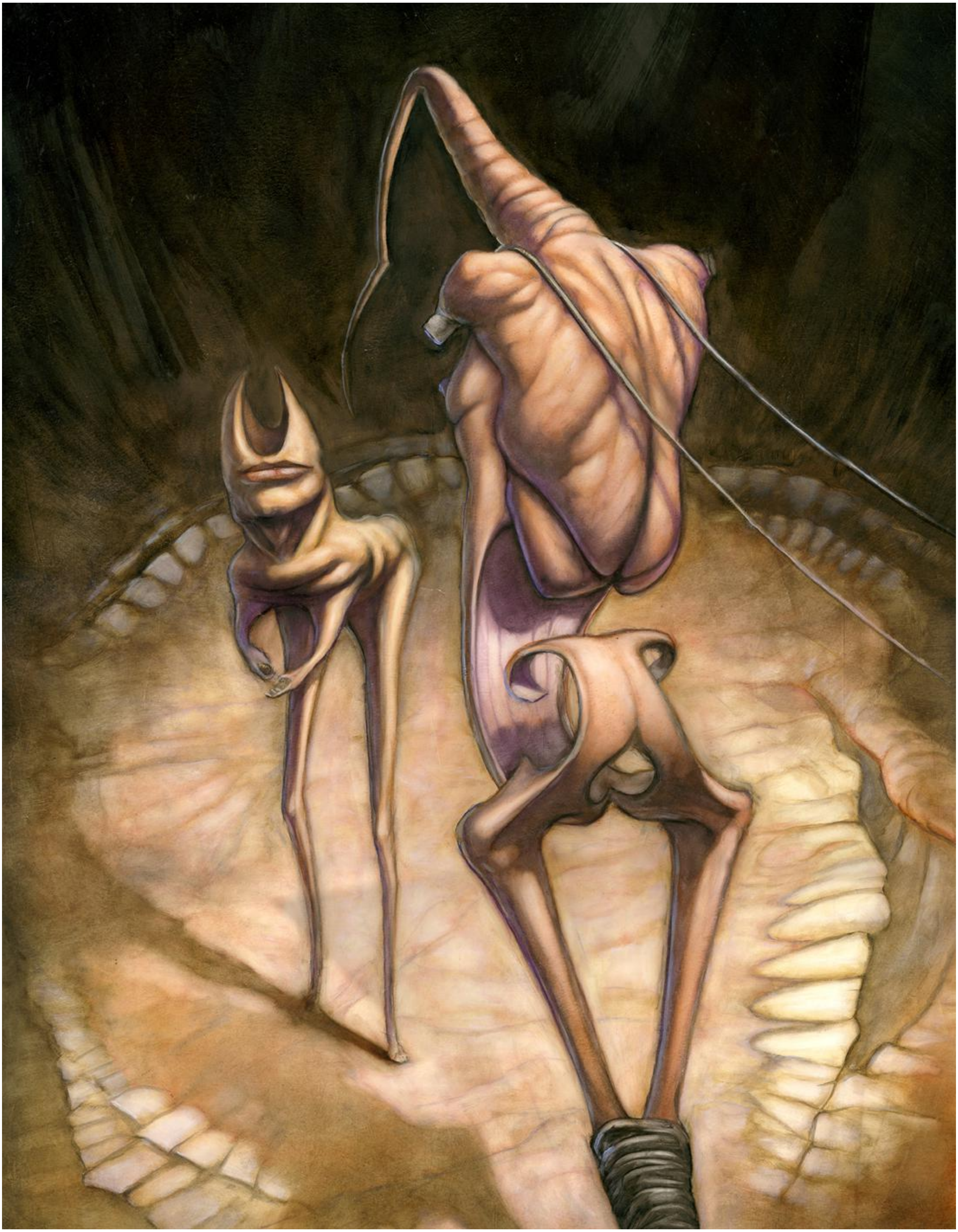
12.25 x 10.25, oils on gessoed print paper



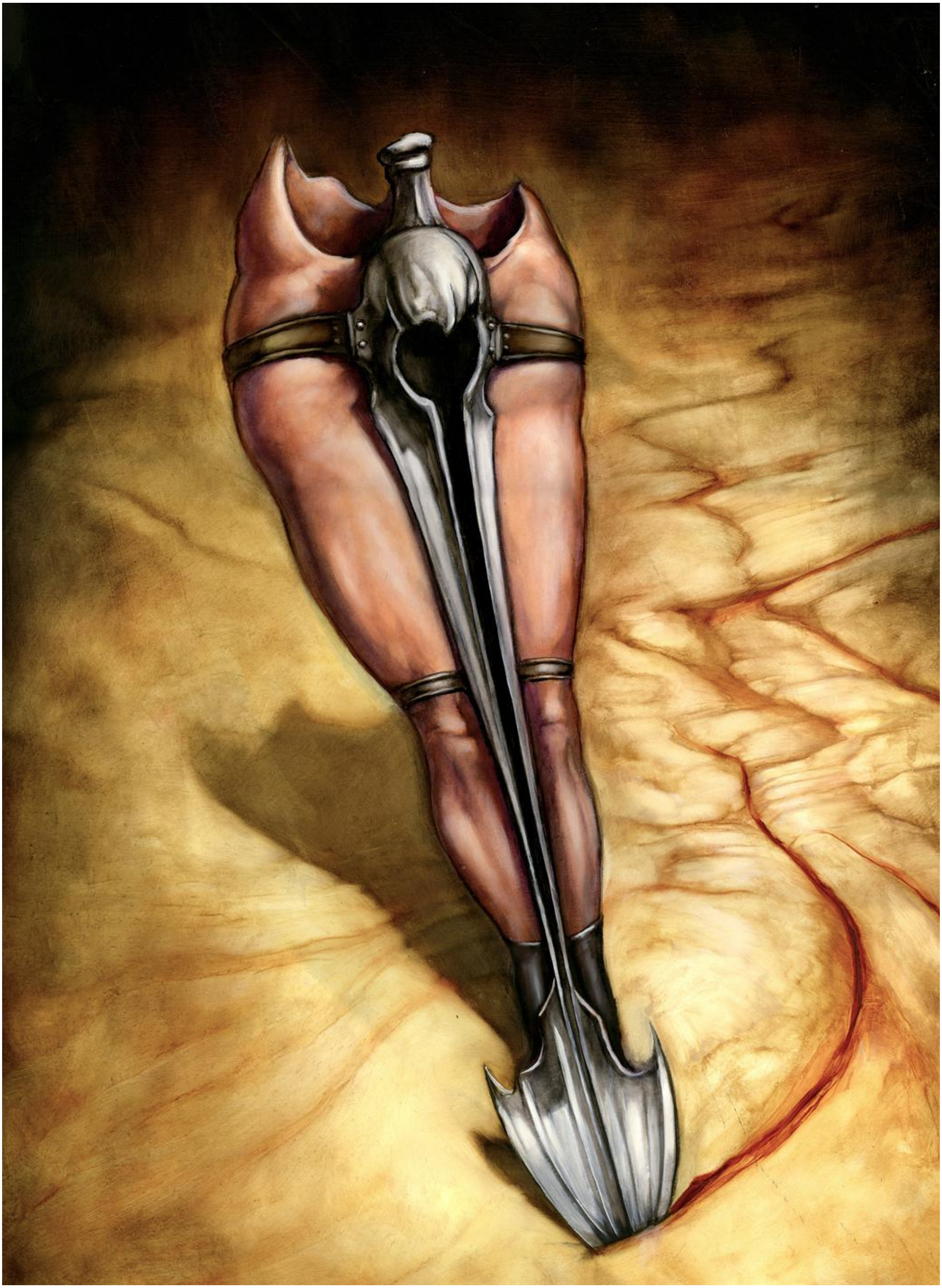
At the Altar of Needles
15 X 22 inches, oils on gessoed print paper



Cliteral Smile
5 X 7, oils on board



In the Theatre of Teeth
15 X 22 inches, oils on gessoed print paper



Scar Tissue

15 X 22 inches, oils on gessoed print paper

ArtSync: Let's face it; we all have something in our brain that clicks on and off. For an artist this clicking can be pretty intense. Depression, anxiety — what's your remedy?

Abrahamson: I've been diagnosed as a manic depressive and was put on medication that just about killed me. I'd go days without sleeping or eating. You know I have super highs and very dark, deep depressions. I don't know if the work is mirroring me, or if I'm mirroring the work itself. One of my favorite discoveries was Bob Ross, the happy tree painting guy…you know who I'm talking about…right?

ArtSync: I love him — of course I know who he is!

Abrahamson: I looked him up on the internet and found out he was a sniper in the military. He went on numerous tours. And I'm thinking to myself ok, this is a guy taking people out, but then he's the happy painter guy. So you have this trained killer who switched to the other side of the spectrum which really hits on what we're talking about here.

ArtSync: I didn't know that about him. I could just sit and watch Bob forever. He's like my favorite drug. I get so calm and dopy watching him. Thanks for the sniper visual. That's great!

Abrahamson: I love him too!

ArtSync: Do you see a pattern with these super highs and lows?

Abrahamson: When I moved from Chicago to San Diego, I hung with a bunch of surfers and they spent an enormous about of time watching the waves trying to figure it out. But when it got down to it, when the set came in you rode it. You can try to be prepared for it and figure out what's gonna happen, but its mother nature. Those big waves come when they come. I've always thought that the creative process for me personally is kind of like that. When those big waves come in you go with it, and then there are periods of time there's nothing. You just learn to milk those big ones out as much as you can and I find my emotional moods are pretty much the same way. When I'm up I try to take full advantage of it and when I'm down, I guess I self medicate.

ArtSync: How were you received early on by galleries and media?

Abrahamson: In the beginning there was a lot of trial and error. When I first decided I wanted to try and market my work in galleries I was doing this hiatus stuff. It was something I had to go through. I call it my *Melted Candy* series. And you're never gonna see an image of it…ever. [Laughs] I did a ton of this stuff. It was super colorful and abstract. If you saw it now, you'd never even guess I produced it. I was playing with very bold color and learning what not to do. Anyway, I'd just put all this work in my car and I'd show up at a gallery. I'd strike up a conversation, tell them a bit about myself — they'd say why don't you show us your work sometime, and I'd say, well I've got it in my car. The second they heard that, they didn't have time. So I knew this approach wasn't working. I checked out every book on business I could get my hands on and I read. I learned I needed to be a professional. There was no internet. You presented your work on slides. They had to be labeled a certain way. I just made sure that I hit all my marks and it was my professionalism that finally broke the dam.

ArtSync: Many artists are afraid of rejection or they just don't know how to market themselves.

Abrahamson: Yeah, that whole fear of rejection thing — you either sink or swim on that. If what you're afraid of is rejection, you'll never be able to break down major doors. You gotta develop a really thick skin. You're putting your soul out there for people to judge. Don't be the crazy artist. Save that for your studio. I go in the studio and I do whatever I damn well feel like doing, and then I come out and put on a different hat. I think to myself, I've created this, now how am I going to market it? It's like when I switched gears and I went from classical figurative pieces to the sado-masochistic stuff. That was a huge jump and I thought, I'm probably gonna lose people that have collected my work in the past, which I did by the droves, but it was something I had to do. I wanted to do it. It's was a lot of research. I read all the art magazines and just found places that would appreciate my style. I even sent Christmas cards to the galleries every year. But yeah, when I was starting out, it was a tough thing to learn, especially if you have any confidence. I thought, I'm doing this great work, so they'll give me a solo exhibition and then you get the crap kicked out of you. I kept every rejection letter I got from a gallery, until I had this three inch thick folder. I saved them, because every rejection gave me a little insight as to what I was doing wrong.

ArtSync: So you really did treat it like a business, saving rejection letters, and the media kit in the form of a Christmas card — that's clever.

Abrahamson: [*Laughs*] It's like I've said in some of the lectures I've given — I tell the kids after you've gone through it a few times you'll find out that one piece will be rejected and you can send the exact same image to a different gallery and they'll love it. It's so subjective, you know, one man's trash is another man's treasure. That insight allowed me to distance myself from it a little bit.

johnua.com

ArtSync: With every no, you get that much closer to a yes. It's really no different than the door-to-door salesman, except it's a little more personal than that.

Abrahamson: Totally. Failure and rejections are the only way to reach where you're going. If you don't take chances you're never gonna get anywhere. You've gotta be willing to put yourself out there. I guess my short answer is, risk taking comes with the territory

ArtSync: Yeah, risk taking and being yourself. Like really knowing who you are so you know what risks to take.

Abrahamson: Oh man, I don't know if it's the same for anybody else, but there's so many times that even the people that love you the most tell you can't do it, and it's not gonna work out — way too easy to get crushed. So yeah, the people that care the most can sometimes drag you down. It's not intentional. It's their way of protecting you. You really do have to follow your instincts.

ArtSync: What's next?

Abrahamson: I've taken to writing. I'm also into film. It's always been an interest for me. I've done some work with Drew Daywalt. He's a horror film writer with a sick twisted mind. We really like each other's work and decided we should do something together. So, I'm writing and dabbling in independent film.

ArtSync: Taking a break from painting?

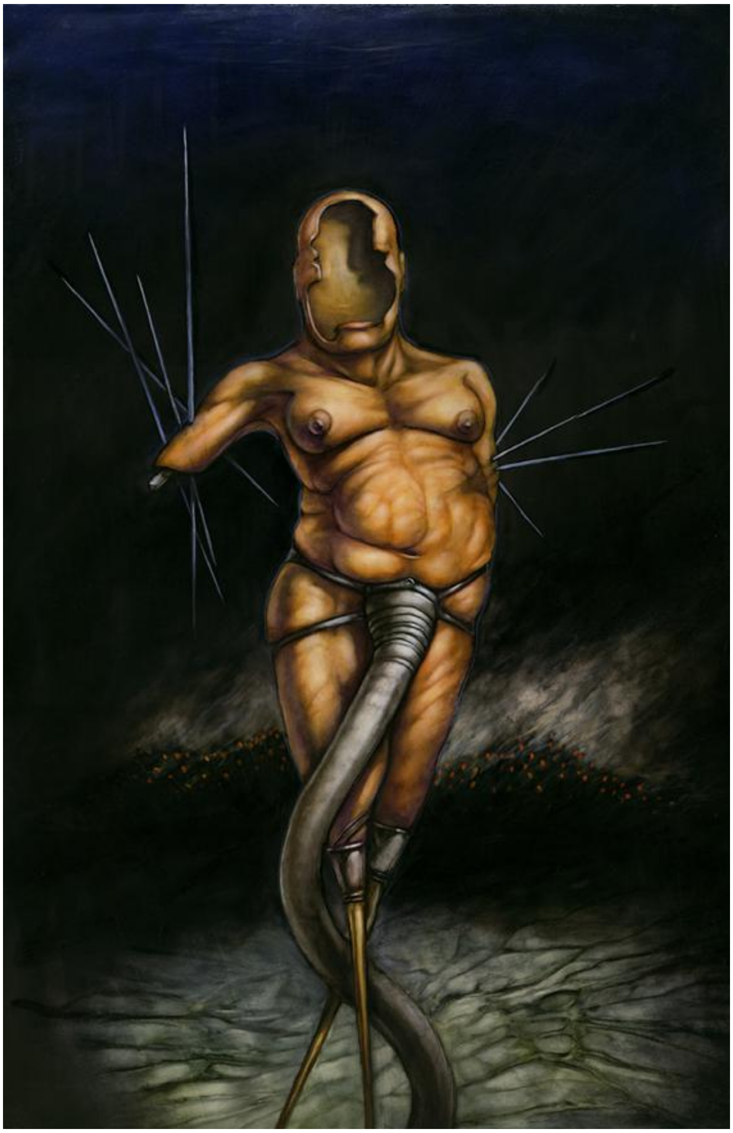
Abrahamson: After my last show, visually I just don't know how much more I can put out. That one almost killed me. I'm trying a different medium, you know, the written word. So we'll see how that goes.

ArtSync: Tell us a bit about Les Barany, and how he came about being your agent.

Abrahamson: A mutual friend connected us. I was kind of that naïve artist, talking to him about where I thought I wanted to go and all the while never thinking I was gonna be a part of his stable, considering how H.R. Giger was always my God artistically. So he gave me some pointers and told me if in the future he had projects that spoke my name, he'd throw me a bone. Then some time went by and he called. He said, "John I'd like to officially represent you if you're interested." I was floored. I could never have been more honored. When people ask me what my crowning achievement is artistically my answer is, becoming part of the Barany Army. He's much more than an agent, he's a friend. He's helped bring out the best in me. He's honest — calls me out and encourages me when it's needed. It's the right balance.

ArtSync: John, it's been a pleasure and also, a bit of an education. Thank you so much for taking the time. Please consider me a fan!

Abrahamson: I'm honored. Thank you. •



Cigarette Burns
15 1/8 X 2 2 1/2 inches, oils on gessoed print paper

Keep up with John at:

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FLESH AND BLOOD

by John U. Abrahamson

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ROCK CONCERTS SHOULD BE DANGEROUS

BY GEORGE PETROS

In my book *Art That Kills* (Creation Books, 2006) I describe an art scene fueled by misanthropy, crime and drugs. From 1984 through 2001 an assortment of colorful characters created confrontational art based on the practices and preachings of political extremists, serial killers, cult leaders, underground heroes and angry wackos. Those influences, combined with the artists' own visions of civilization in decline, added up to headaches for the authorities and nightmares for parents.

The transgressive and subversive art in *Art That Kills* represented the confluence of Pop Culture and dangerous anti-social inclinations. The artists themselves represented a cross-section of White America and England, mostly goys with a few Jews. Some came from good homes, some from abusive situations. Some were supremely talented, some simply ripped off ideas and techniques from others. A volatile mixture of revolutionary political rants from both the Left and the Right drove them onwards. A few of them spent serious time in prison. One was actually a serial killer! They found one another through ads in zines, addresses on independent record covers, and articles in fringe magazines. Multi-talented, they cranked out words, drawings, paintings, photos, collages, films, performance art and music in addition to being editors, producers, archivists, collectors et cetera.

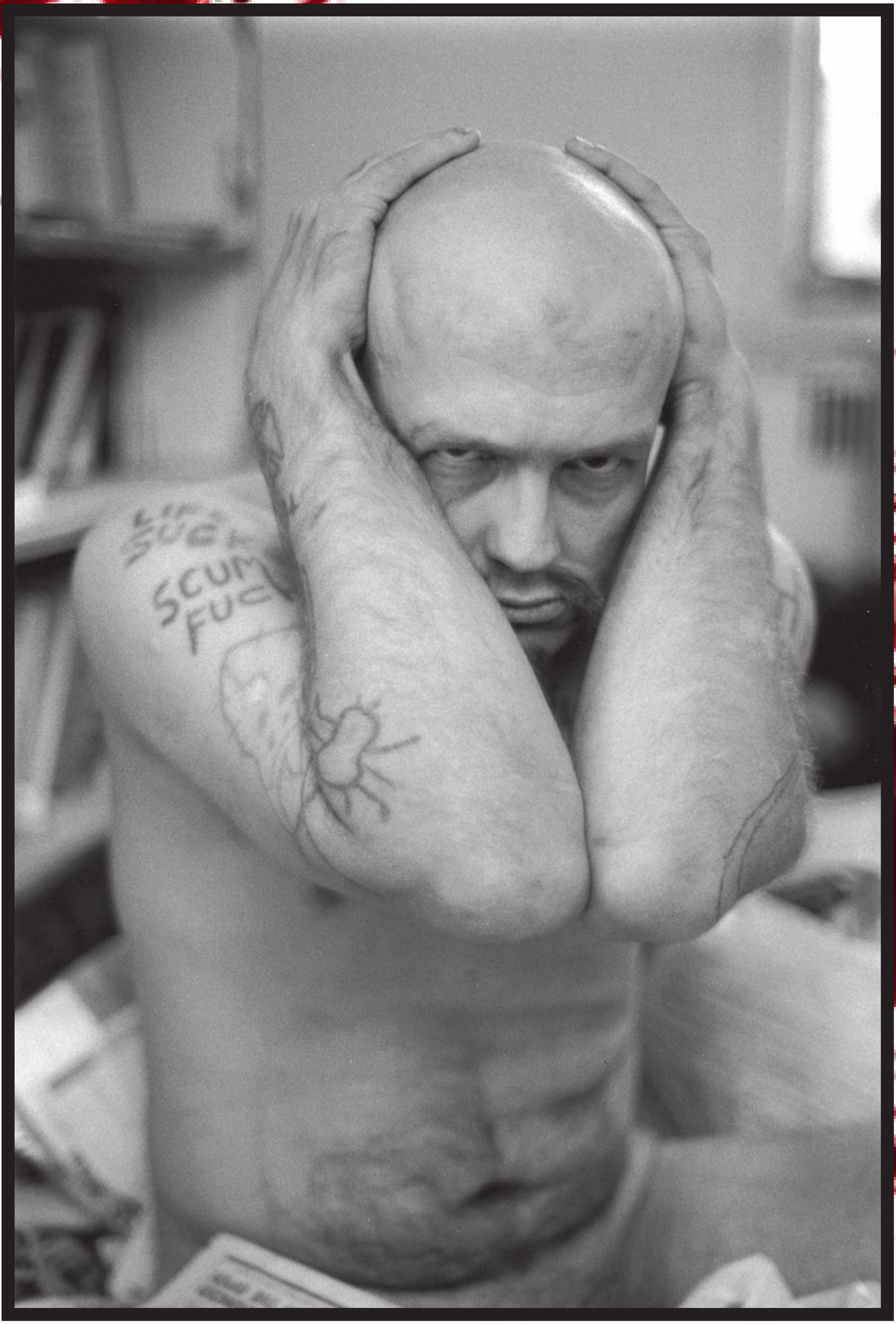
Regarding the musicians: A few of them featured in *Art That Kills* are household names, while many of them might be unfamiliar even to this magazine's well-informed readership.

The scene's sound comes through in the post-Punk and Industrial Rock of NYC acts like Swans, J.G. Thirlwell a.k.a. Foetus, and Lydia Lunch. On the West Coast the vibe was exemplified by Boyd Rice's NON, Nikolas Schreck's Radio Werewolf and John Aes-Nihil's Beyond Joy And Evil. Out in the heartland you had GG Allin's Murder Junkies, Michael Moynihan's Blood Axis, Robert N. Taylor's Changes, David E. Williams and Psychodrama. And from England one heard Douglas P.'s Death In June, David Tibet's Current 93, Tony Wakeford's Sol Invictis, Steven Stapleton's Nurse With Wound and William Bennett's Whitehouse (which later featured the writer Peter Sotos). Bennett once said, "I often fantasized about creating a sound that could bludgeon an audience into submission." Back in the USA, other acts took that transgressive thing and mixed it with Metal: The Electric Hellfire Club, Genitorturers, and ultimately Marilyn Manson.

A frequently-asked question about some (not all) of these guys is: "Are they a Nazi ???" Well, some of them certainly sport expertise on the subject, along with expertise on Satanism, Easy Listening, Exotica, old movies, Anton LaVey, the Partridge Family, girl groups of the Sixties, the occult, Alistair Crowley, Social Darwinism, Charles Manson, serial killers, conspiracies, drugs, booze, UFOs et cetera. Long ago, some pundit branded such all-encompassing tastes "cryptofascism." Mix that with violent tendencies and creative abilities, and you've got art that kills.

Rather than rehashing my own tired-out insights and overwrought analysis of this crazy music scene, let me simply tell you about a day in the life of one of its most notorious subjects.

No Rock Star, no matter how violent or vicious, no matter how intense or threatening, compares to GG Allin. He truly made Rock dangerous. His homemade tattoos looked painful. His countenance belied an animal-like propensity to lash out at anyone at any time. Even his closest cohorts kept their distance. He stayed very high on a variety of drugs and liquor. He injured groupies, sometimes seriously (he did time in jail for torturing one unlucky young lady); he beat up people with whom he disagreed, he played with guns and knives, he intimidated promoters and club owners, and he caused audiences to run for their lives. Regarding his concerts (which seldom lasted longer than a couple of songs), labels like "confrontational" and "shocking" read like the oft-ignored cancer warnings on cigarette packs: folks flocked to GG's shows despite the dangers. Most of those folks wound up wishing they'd stayed home.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GG ALLIN — THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN IN ROCK WHEN HE WAS ALIVE!
PHOTO BY RICHARD KERN

ROCK CONCERTS SHOULD BE DANGEROUS!

GG fronted The Murder Junkies, premier Scum Rock act of all time. Their claim to fame, besides the presence of Deathtrip filmmaker Richard Kern on guitar and David Duke's brother-in-law Sherman on bass, was that GG was going to kill himself at any moment, right on stage. That was his shtick. In my 1990 interview with him for *Seconds* Magazine, he told me, "I'm someone who actually will go to my grave for something I believe in. Most people will talk about it, but I'm actually the guy that will do it." Three years later he was dead from a Heroin overdose.

Whenever GG invited his friends to his shows, he told them exactly where to sit or stand in order to avoid his assaults upon the audience. Always a designated area provided safety from flying feces and breaking glass. So, GG told me to stand in the back of the room, to the left of the door, when he invited me to see him play the New York club Downtime in 1992. The place was packed with jaded, hipper-than-thou types who obviously had seen it all, and done it all, and who took the challenges of a GG Allin show in stride. They harbored attitudes like, "GG won't mess with me — I'm just like him!" or "I can take it — and I'll dish it out, too!" Boy, were they in for a surprise.

To make a long story short, the band came on stage, launched into a high-energy anthem, and got the audience rockin' right away. Then they played another quickly-delivered tune. During the third number everything came crashing down. GG took off his clothes, those being a jock strap and black leather jacket (he kept on his motorcycle boots) and, dear reader, would you believe that he relieved himself of the most disgusting diarrhea-style excrement imaginable — right into his waiting hands cupped beneath his squatting arse? The band played on. GG rubbed it all over himself, slathering it on like a beloved condiment. The audience mostly kept its collective cool, of course. Except for the mind-boggling stench — GG always ate just the right combination of cheap bad food in order to maximize olfactory offense — they sensed no immediate threat.

Having slathered it on the inside of his thighs, he reached into the audience and grabbed a young blonde girl by the hair. He put her head between his excrement-coated thighs, which he clamped around her so that she could not pull her head free. When she attempted to get loose, her hands slid on the sickening slickness covering GG. When her boyfriend stepped up to help her, GG punched him in the face, breaking his nose. The audience tried to run, but overcrowded conditions caused a jam at the door. GG started flinging fecal matter at the shrieking crowd. It covered him from head to toe. No one could touch him; no one could stop him. He marched toward the terrified crowd, hurling it. They ran as if running from a raging fire or a starving shark.

From our safety zone, those of us who knew and loved GG watched in amusement as New York's coolest crowd reduced itself to human cattle stampeding from certain death (rumor had it that GG had AIDS, therefore his excrement posed a special danger…). Now I know what a fire in a crowded club would look like, with horrified hipsters climbing over each other to escape, and men trampling their girlfriends underfoot.

The crowd eventually pushed its way out, screaming and crying. Outside, police cars arrived, screeching to a halt on the sidewalk. Hipsters who hated cops now begged them for help. People were crying and tearing off their feces-stained clothes. Everybody had at least a speck or two on them.

As the crowd poured out, the last figure to escape was a guy in a long trench coat and a watch cap pulled down over his face. It was GG himself, disguised. Unrecognized, he ran outside with the freaked-out mob and, as others blathered their sorry stories to incredulous cops, he ran off down the street and into the New York night, never to be caught. I thought of something he said to me during that aforementioned interview: "I really don't give a shit because I don't care about people anyway." Now that's art that kills!

To learn more about the author, George Petros,
please visit his website at:

georgepetros.com

ART THAT KILLS
A Panoramic Portrait of Aesthetic Terrorism 1984-2001

A Panoramic Portrait of AESTHETIC TERRORISM 1984-2001
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Sean Yseult

ROCKSTAR • DESIGNER • WRITER

interview by Christine Clemmons

Sean Yseult is most famously known for the band she started in 1985: White Zombie, with Rob Cummings a.k.a. Rob Zombie. The New York City-based band went from playing clubs in the East Village during the Punk Rock DIY days to sold-out arenas with names like Pantera, The Ramones, Metallica, Anthrax and Megadeth. After 11 years, White Zombie broke up, and Yseult moved to New Orleans. She started a new band, Rock City Morgue, and launched a design company, Yseult Designs. She graced galleries across the nation with her beautiful photography, wrote a tell-all book titled *I'm In The Band,* and, oh yeah, she recently started the band Star and Dagger, with Donna She-Wolf, former guitarist of Cycle Sluts From Hell. But wait! I left one out: The Famous Monsters, yet another band to which Yseult brings her musical genius! I don't know when she sleeps!

Yseult was born and raised in Raleigh, North Carolina. Her parents were both English professors, her father at North Carolina State University, and her mother at Peace College. In fact, her father, Michael Reynolds was a bit of a celebrity himself, writing five biographies of Ernest Hemingway. He won the National Book Award and became President of The Hemingway Society. So yeah, Yseult lived a life most artists dream about. I mean, why not? Between the music, theater, dance, brilliant, easy-going parents, and just the Hippie-type ambience, she was set for the making of a Rock Star.

In her very early years she was performing in Blues clubs with seasoned musicians, as well as training to be a concert pianist with a teacher who taught her to read music before she learned to read books. At 12 she had toured with the Raleigh Youth Orchestra, was accepted at the North Carolina School of the Arts, and was even in a Rock Band with older teenagers. Whew! So it's no surprise nowadays that Yseult keeps things rockin' on many levels.

Yseult's book*, I'm In The Band* embodies more than just her experiences with White Zombie; it is a biography of her life, capturing her youth as well as what she's up to now. Although the book has its serious side, it is equally filled with fun crazy-ass stories. For example, there's the bit about Johnny Depp's house when she almost drove off a cliff, and another when Keanu Reeves ran away in fright from the band. I could go on to tell you that she wrote the riffs for White Zomie's "Black Sunshine" picked for Guitar Hero, or that two years in a row, *Metal Maniacs* crowned her Best Metal Bassist Of The Year, but I'd ruin it for you, because there's nobody who can tell the story better than Yseult. And lucky for us, she's told it in her book *I'm In The Band*. So after you finish reading this interview, go get your hands on your own copy and experience the tales of an almost forgotten era — the struggles of making it to the top, a love affair with Heavy Metal and sex on the beach…just kidding, but there are some juicy stories hiding in those beautifully designed pages. Whether you're a fan of the music or not, after reading the book you'll be a fan of Yseult! With each flip of the page she'll crawl a little deeper into your heart.

Sean Yseult
photo by Marina Chavez

ArtSync: When did the idea for your book, I'm In The Band *come up? Had you always known you were gonna write one?*

Yseult: No, I never thought about making a book like this. A couple of years ago I was contacted by our management about putting out a White Zombie box set, and they asked me about getting some old VHS bootlegs. I had kept everything in storage in New Orleans since I moved here when White Zombie broke up back in 1996. I had never looked in my storage space to go through any of the memorabilia I kept. We kind of ended on a bad note, so I wasn't very excited about digging through it. I started opening up all these old boxes labeled White Zombie, and it was like I found this treasure trove. Instead of it being bad memories it was amazing, so many fun things. There were piles of photo albums — pictures I had taken, even tour diaries that I had kept in the back of tour schedule books — flyers and laminates — there was so much stuff I couldn't believe it. So that's what triggered it. I saw all that stuff, and I felt like I needed to present that for the people — share it with those who want it.

ArtSync: Actually it wasn't at all what I expected. It is sort of a scrapbook, but with just the right amount of info to go along with the imagery. It's a really fun read, and lots of cool photos.

Yseult: Thank you so much. I was guided a little bit by my agent. I consulted her when I first got the idea, and she liked it so much that she wanted to represent me. At first I was just putting together a scrapbook, kind of like you said, but I would write a little bit here and there, and my agent really liked my writing so she encouraged me to continue. It turned into a hybrid of a coffee table photo book and an autobiography, I guess.

I'M IN THE BAND
Backstage Notes from the Chick in White Zombie
Sean Yseult
ALL ACCESS
WHITE ZOMBIE
Riffing and writing:

A collage of pictures taken from Yseult's book, *I'm In The Band*

ArtSync: I feel inspired by the struggles you had and how rooted your involvement was in the band's success. I asked a few of my music friends what they knew of you. The answers were pretty much the same; Sean Yseult is a wicked badass bass player — but none of them really knew how involved you were. Does this surprise you?

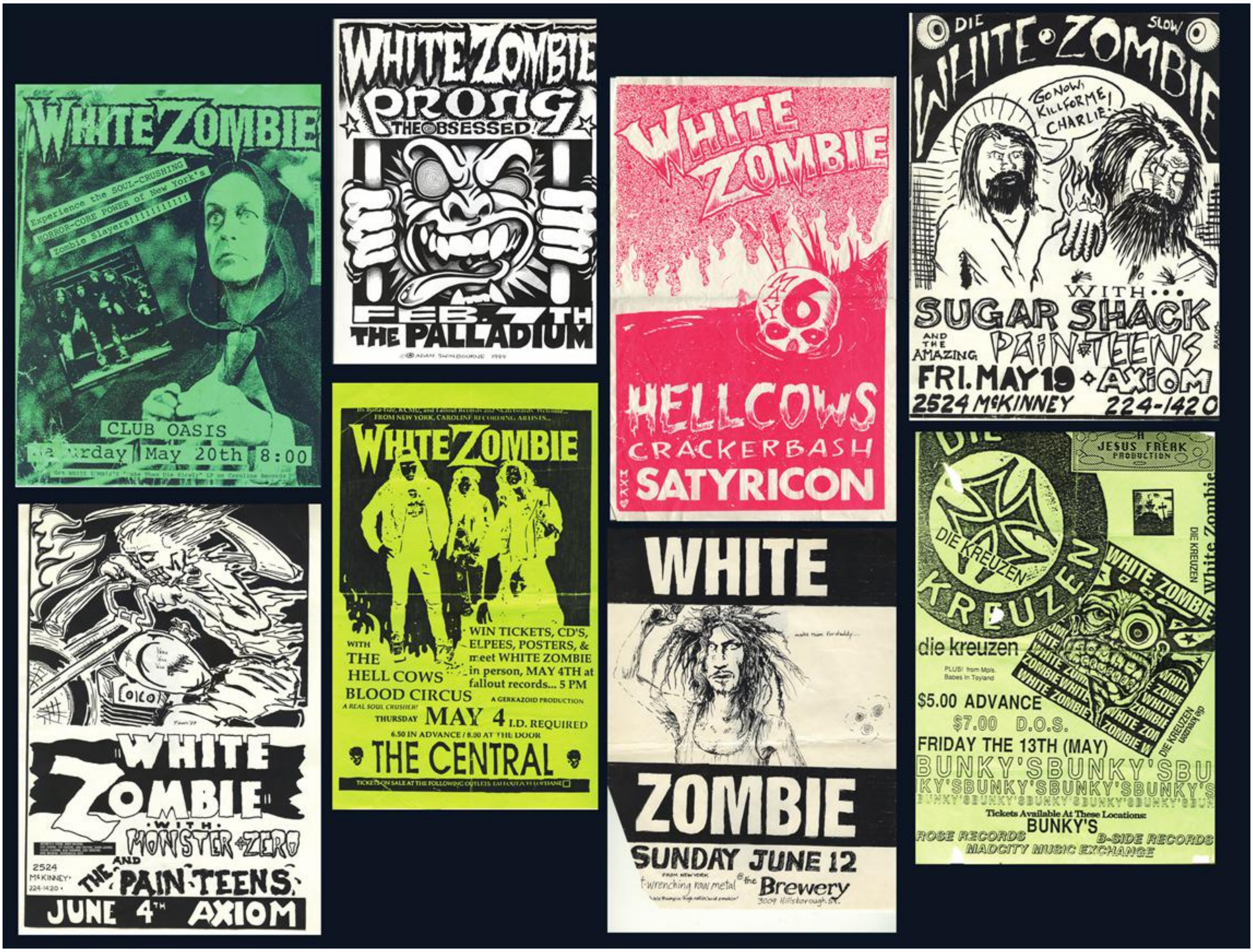
Yseult: No it doesn't. The past ten years or so, people have asked me if I was in Rob Zombie, and I'm always like no, I was in the band, White Zombie. [*Laughs*] There are new people discovering White Zombie all the time, so that's kind of nice.

ArtSync: I noticed Rob gets a lot of the credit. I see your name listed, but it's all about him. It is kind of confusing. I never knew the difference between White Zombie and Rob Zombie until Jerry Lee Williams wrote that bit on you in our Summer 2009 issue.

Yseult: That's kind of typical when a lead singer goes solo. The band members are pretty much dismissed. It's not surprising that there's no attention drawn to that. I think it's important for people to know that White Zombie was a real band. I mean, I wrote a lot of music, and so did J. Yuenger. Ivan dePrume busted his ass for the band and built us a practice studio — got us a van. Everybody did their part. It was definitely a full on effort between all of us. Rob and I started the band and divided most of the duties between the two of us. Rob wrote the lyrics and drew the illustrations. I did the graphics and wrote the riffs, and in the early days I booked the tours — handled the business part of it. So it was a lot of work, you know, back in the Punk Rock DIY days, but it's what we wanted to do.

ArtSync: You mention in the book that you'd call clubs and book gigs for White Zombie, never letting on that you were in the band.

Yseult: That happened quite a bit. Sometimes they still hadn't put it together that there was a girl on stage, so when I met them afterwards, they realized I was a girl, and then they'd put it together that I had the same name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Early White Zombie flyers, *I'm In The Band,* pg. 22

as the person who called to book the gig. It was always kind of funny. The main reason why I did it that way is it seemed unprofessional for a band to try and book themselves. I wouldn't lie and say I was the manager of the band, but I'd definitely allude that I was someone else, you know, I wouldn't say I was in the band.

ArtSync: I read about how you didn't draw attention to the fact that you were a girl — was there ever any real issues with you being the girl in White Zombie?

Yseult: Yeah, people mistook me for a guy when they saw me. I was so skinny and I always had long hair and I dressed the same as everyone else, so I guess it was a little bit of a defense mechanism on my part. It was that whole Metal scene — there weren't that many girls in bands back then and I just thought it would be a little easier. I didn't have too many negative experiences as far as guys being chauvinistic backstage. It definitely helped I think that people thought I was a guy at first. [*Laughs*]

ArtSync: For the record, you don't look anything like a guy, but I can see your point. I've seen some live performances on video and you're not really a female or a male on stage, you're just a musician.

Yseult: I appreciate that. Thank you. I didn't ever want to be seen as a girl trying to market the fact that I was female. Like I said in the book, I was able to slide by and not necessarily be perceived as a girl, but in the end, of course, people knew I was, and they still treated me with equal respect, so that was nice.

ArtSync: All these bands that you toured with — opening for Pantera, becoming a family on tour with them and many other bands — do you still stay in touch, and what is their take on the book?

Yseult: Yeah, I was just hanging out with Phil from Pantera and the guys from Eyehategod, and they all love it. I'm really great friends with J. from White Zombie, and it just blew him away; he couldn't believe it. He felt like he was reliving his past through the book.

ArtSync: You know, it's not just a book about your life, it's a real scrapbook of everyone who was involved.

Yseult: Yeah, I mean all these bands were a big part of my life at the time, and it's been really nice reconnecting with them. A lot of these people I haven't seen in many years, so I made the effort to get in touch with them and let them know they're in the book. [*Laughs*] The responses have been really great.

WHITE ZOMBIE
IVAN
ROB
J.
SEAN
LA SEXORCISTO: DEVIL MUSIC VOL.1
WHITE ZOMBIE
THE HOLLYWOOD PALLADIUM JUNE 27
TOWER RECORDS
TOWER VIDEO
OPEN
9AM TO MIDNIGHT
WELCOME
THE CURE
JODECI
BOYZ 2 MEN
HAMMER
WHITE ZOMBIE
Budget rent a car of Sunset Strip
GEFFEN'S
WHITE ZOMBIE
PALLADIUM JUNE 27

1993 Geffen Advertising
Some of the first signs of fame for White Zombie.
Photos taken from *I'm In The Band,* pg. 53

ArtSync: Tell us about your new band.

Yseult: It's called Star And Dagger, and I'm playing with an old friend of mine, Donna She-Wolf. She's a guitarist and actually, she used to be in the band, Cycle Sluts from Hell. We hadn't seen each other in years, but we recently reconnected in New York. It's a funny story. We were in a bar, and Lenny Kaye, the guitarist from Patti Smith was there, and he kept going on about the two of us starting a band together. Lenny's a huge fan of girl bands. We kind of joked about it, but we kept running into him and he'd ask, "when are you starting that band," so we decided we'd start one for Lenny. [*Laughs*] Anyway, it's been a lot of fun. We both really like playing heavy music, so it's definitely more in the realm of 70's Heavy Rock and Metal, like Black Sabbath and Blue Cheer. We have a female singer and she's got this amazing Blues range. She can really belt it out. We've written and recorded five songs, and we're going back out to Joshua Tree in a month or so to record some more. I'm really excited about that.

ArtSync: So while you were playing your way to the top, did it ever hit you that you were leading the way — influencing girls who had similar dreams?

Yseult: It didn't really at the time, but since White Zombie's broken up, it has definitely hit me. I've had a lot of girls write to me and sometimes I'm recognized. There have been a lot of people who have said they picked up the bass because of me, and it's always so nice to hear. I had very few female idols to look up too. Like I said in the book, I had Joan Jett and Ivy Rorschach from The Cramps, so that was about it. Joan Jett was really an inspiration to me. I got to see her play — actually, it was the first show I ever saw. I had a fake ID when I was 16, so I got to see the show in North Carolina. It was the *I Love Rock 'N' Roll* tour and it was amazing. She was dressed — had her hair cut just like Dee Dee Ramone, and wore her guitar down on her knees and there she was, just rockin' out, and I thought, well that's what I wanna do. That was pretty cool, and of course The Cramps — just amazing. I don't know where I fit in between the two of them, but it's nice to hear I've inspired people, you know, like I was inspired by them.

ArtSync: What advice would you give to young musicians just starting out?

Yseult: The main advice I'd give is make sure you really love this, and that it's your passion and it's what you want to do, because no matter what, it's a lot of hard work. It's so rare for bands to actually make it and get famous, you know, to survive off of touring and record sales, and just whatever. So it has to be something you're really serious about — it has to be in your heart. I mean, you can do it for fun, but realize it might just be for fun. You know, a lot of advice I could give would be outdated now, because you don't really need to go out at four in the morning and hang up flyers with wheatpaste, and you don't need to slug it out in the van while touring. You could just put up a video on YouTube, I suppose, and get 50 million hits like what's her name — The Friday Girl. [*Laughs*] So a lot of my advice as far as trying to make it wouldn't uphold anymore. There's other advice I could give to girls in particular, like I didn't make it any easier on myself learning on crappy basses. It was all I could afford at the time, but if you can afford a decent bass with good action it's amazing how much better you'll sound. You'll learn to play better…faster. If you have a bad bass with bad action you're really gonna have to develop a lot of finger strength to get it down, which I had to do over the years. I wish I had had that starting out.

ArtSync: I'm seeing more and more of this equipment that simulates all different types of instruments. You don't even have to go into the studio anymore. I think we may be losing a certain magic in the music industry.

Yseult: In a way it's very liberating that anyone can be a kid in their bedroom and make a record if they want. If you're inspired you can do that and it's an amazing thing in that respect. But in the other hand, you're never gonna have a record like Queen's *A Night at the Opera*. You're never gonna have some of these great records that took months and months, or a year in the studio to complete, you know, with millions of tracks — that live sound, real performances and real singers that aren't auto tuned. So that's kind of dying out I think. Nothing will ever replace a talented live musician, but there's always going to be more and more technology available.

ArtSync: I guess it has its pros and cons.

Yseult: Exactly. Believe me I appreciate all spectrums of music. I love garage bands, like the stuff on Estrus Records. I created a band called Famous Monsters with that label in mind. I really love the low-fi recordings they would do. You know, like sometimes just one microphone for the whole band — so stripped down and maybe the record cost 20 dollars to make — I love that part too. [*Laughs*] On one hand that's kind of what you have now, and you can actually make them sound fairly decent, but there is something lost in the digital, and that's just the way it is now. Photography is going the same way. It's different.

ArtSync: So what's up with the photography? Gosh, is there anything you don't do?

Yseult: Well, I've been trying to figure out a way to incorporate my photography with my designs, but it just hasn't quite worked out yet. So for now I'm keeping it separated. I'm actually working on a new photo show at the moment. I've just done a few of the photos, but I don't want to give it away. [*Laughs*] I can tell you it's gonna be very dream-like, and will involve a lot of collaging of images. I'm very excited about it. I probably won't have it completely together until 2012. I really love the old black and white photography using imagery where you can't really date things — where you can't quite place the era or the place. I like conjuring that up, so that's kind of my style, I guess.

ArtSync: Speaking of style, your designs are beautiful — so rich in color.

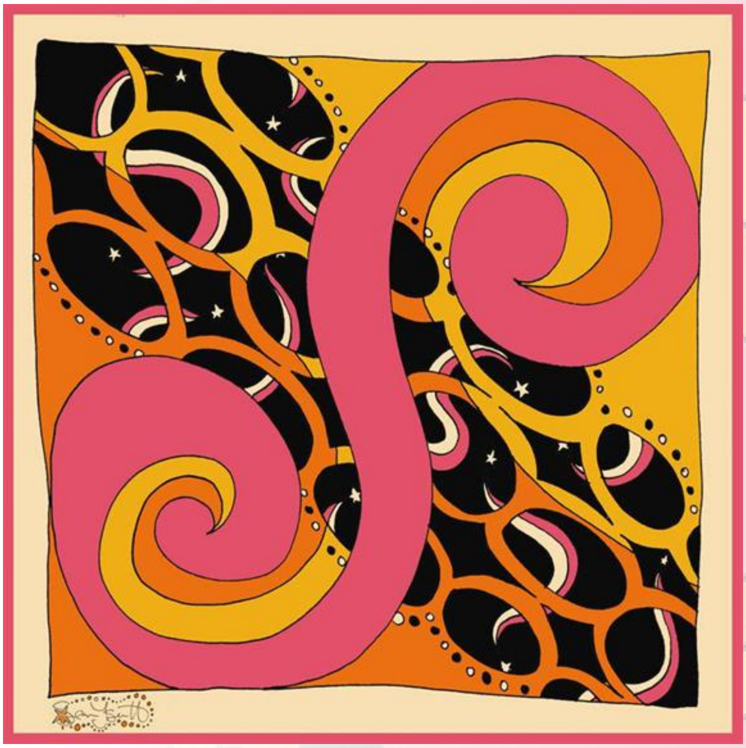
Yseult: Thank you. When I started up my design company I was drawing and filling up pages with my designs. It's the same thing I did when I was really little, like 5 or 6 years old. My parents had saved some of my drawings from when I was a child, and they were like, "oh my gosh, that looks so much like what you did when you were little." They're all in crayon or watercolor, but otherwise not much different from what I'm doing now. [*Laughs*] I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing, but I think it's just something I do subconsciously, like it's wired in since an early age — making these abstract drawings. I really enjoy creating them. I do it fairly quickly and I don't fix any mistakes. It's all part of not driving myself crazy with perfectionism like I used to. Today with computers anyone can create perfect designs. You can do some amazing things with all these programs, like Photoshop, but I wanted to have everything hand drawn, like real quality work, I guess because that's how I grew up doing it. It might be a lost thing in the future. I don't know.

ArtSync: That goes back to what we were talking about with the digital process. There are some talented digital artists out there, but I prefer the hand-drawn, you know, pen to paper or brush to canvas. I don't want to use the term "the old-fashioned way," it makes me feel really old, but you know, there is a difference.

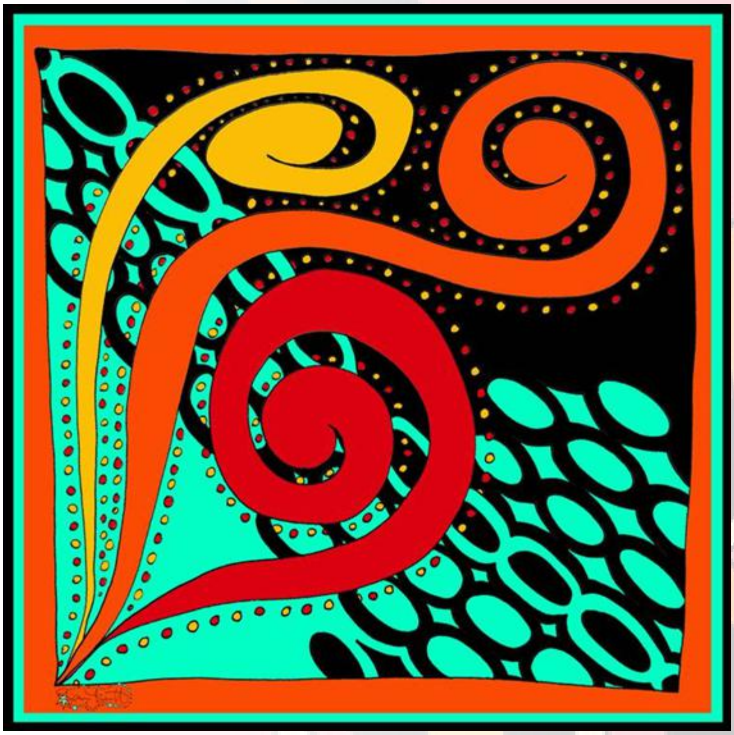
Yseult: That's true. I hope its not gonna become lost and that people will still use their hands to create visual things.

ArtSync: You went to Parsons for design before you started White Zombie, but was it all part of the plan to start a band?

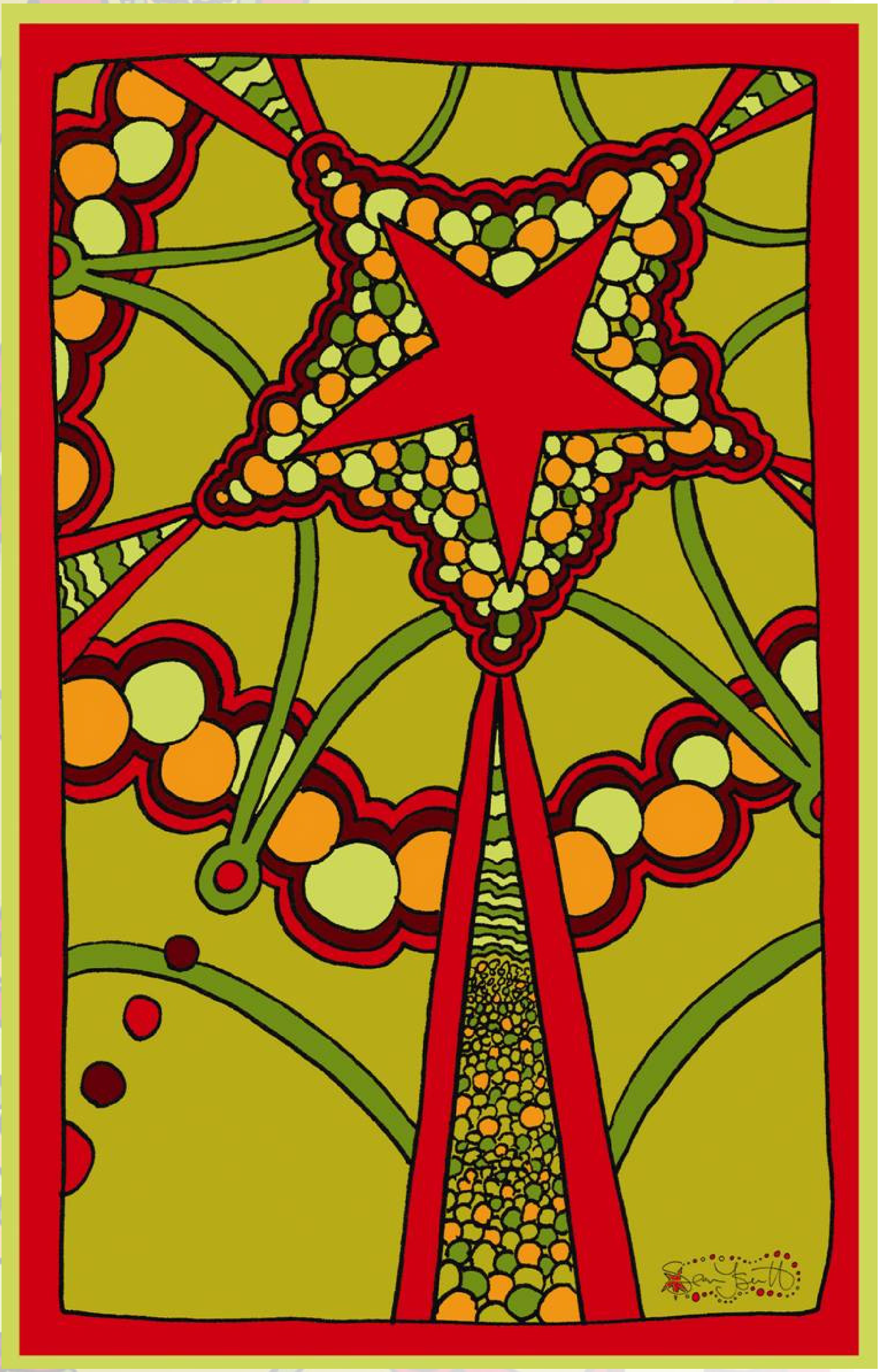
Yseult: I did have a plan. I went to the North Carolina School of the Arts, and in my senior year I spent it in the Arts and Design department, so I knew I wanted to go to New York and study design. But like I said, I had seen a Joan Jett show and I got into Hardcore and Punk music. I knew I wanted to go to New York and be in a band too. I kind of had two plans. But while I was still young enough, I wanted to get out there and play in a band. Once White Zombie took off, we ended up touring for 11 years. I promised myself that when we broke up I'd get back into design and start my own company. I actually ended up here in New Orleans and I was in a good position to start my own company so I decided to go for it.



Universe

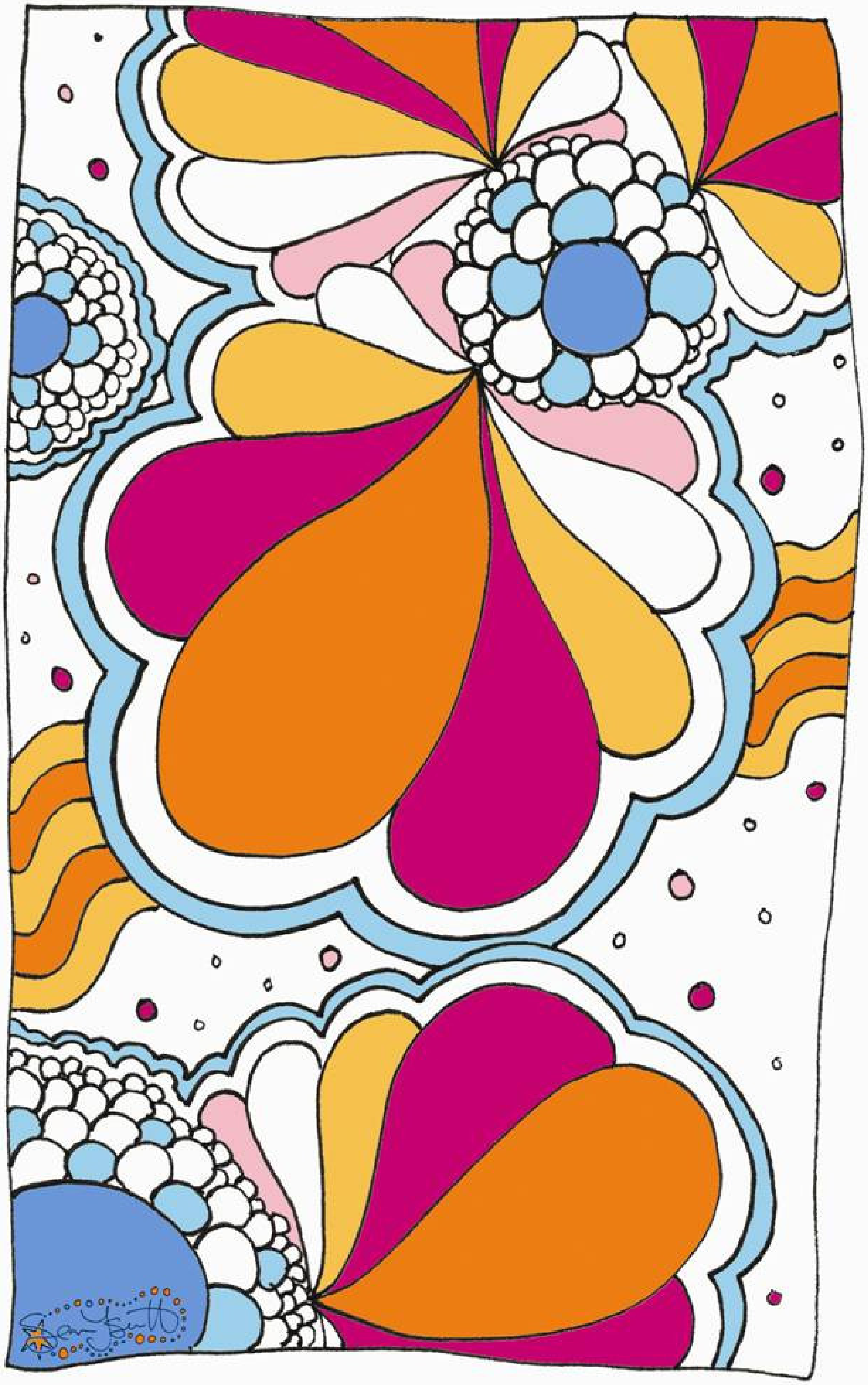


Spiral Bouquet



Star

yseultdesigns.com



Peacock Bubble

ArtSync: You were very involved in the arts growing up. In your book, you touch on your piano teacher and how she planned to turn you into a concert pianist. Have you ever heard from her? I mean she has to know what you've accomplished and where you are now, right?

Yseult: I don't know if she knows. I ran into her in the early days of White Zombie at an airport in North Carolina, and I said hi — told her I was in a band, so you know, I was letting her know that I was using my musical education. [*Laughs*] She kind of didn't really want to talk to me, but I'm sure I looked pretty freaky at the time. I might have had a mohawk or dreadlocks. But still, she didn't seem happy to see me. [*Laughs*] I think I really pissed her off when I called her bluff and quit, because she put a lot of time and energy into me over the years, I suppose. But I just didn't want to be a concert pianist. It seemed like a horrible fate. I loved playing piano, but I was also tormented, because I'd have a nervous breakdown every time I had to perform in front of people — it was stressful.

ArtSync: You're still playing the piano though, right?

Yseult: I play piano in my band, Rock City Morgue, here in New Orleans. I compose a portion of the songs on piano. It's really been nice, but I think I finally feel like I don't have that pressure of perfectionism hanging over me, so it's more fun.

ArtSync: Yeah, it's funny because I have this visual of you on stage as a concert pianist, like a very conservative-type funny cartoon in my head. Doesn't seem your style at all, so good for you for making that choice early on.

Yseult: *[Laughs]* Thanks. It was a tough call, but she was just too demanding and I couldn't take it. She was an amazing teacher. I wish I could thank her. But like I said, she didn't seem pleased to see me.

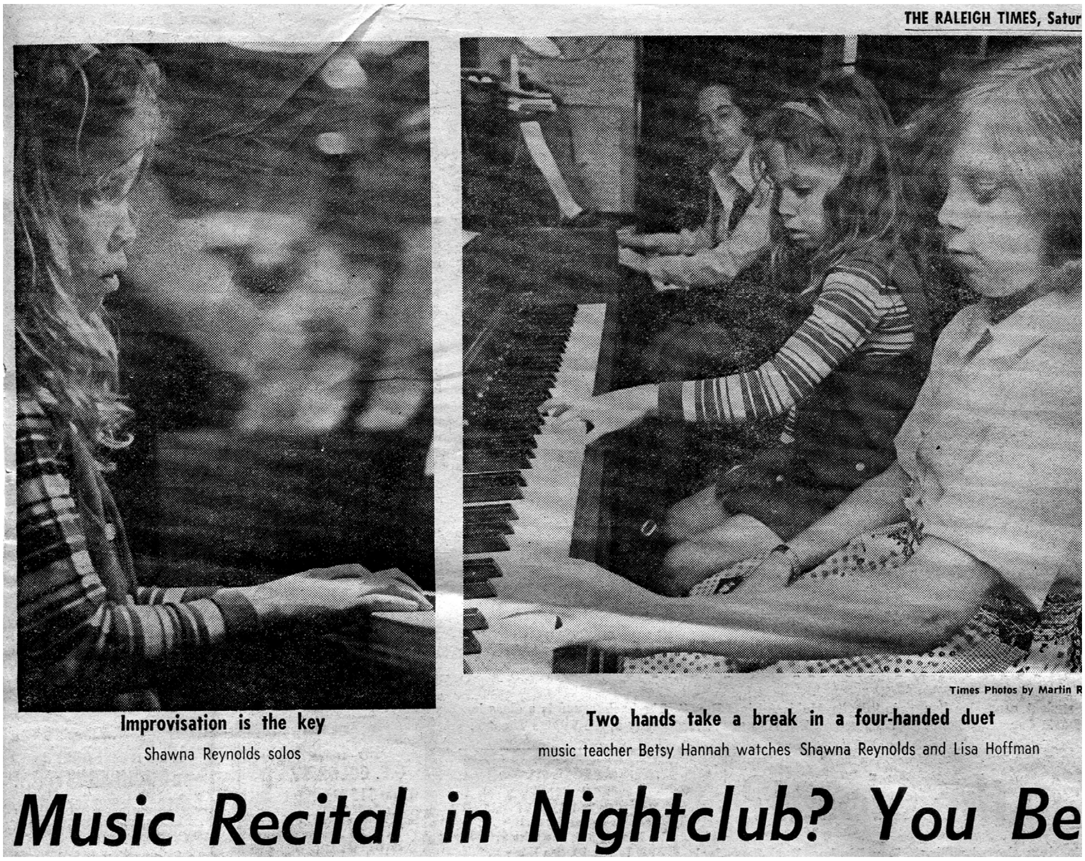
ArtSync: You credited your parents in the book for so much of who you are. Did they ever get a chance to come watch you perform with White Zombie?

Yseult: They were really supportive. I was lucky to have two bohemian Hippie-type parents that cranked a lot of Stones, Beatles and Hendrix when I was little. So they couldn't be too upset that I ended up in a Rock Band. [*Laughs*] White Zombie would always crash with them when we'd come through North Carolina, and later they lived in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and I think I mentioned in the book that we crashed there on our way to California when we made our move. They'd always come to shows, and they would sometimes bring all their bohemian-type friends. Even when we were playing big arenas, they'd get a big crew of them together — enjoy some cocktails and watch the show. [*Laughs*] Some of their friends were artists and really liked the lights and all the visual effects, so it was fun that they appreciated it. At the time, you're like, oh god that's my parents, but looking back, it was very sweet. They really stressed that it was important to enjoy whatever it was we were going to do for a living when we were younger. So their advice, you know, it worked out well.

Yseult practicing piano as a child to
FAMOUS BASSIST
towering over the world!

Ampeg Advertisement Photo Shoot
photo by Rick Gould

SEAN YSEULT



THE RALEIGH TIMES, Satur

Improvisation is the key

Shawna Reynolds solos

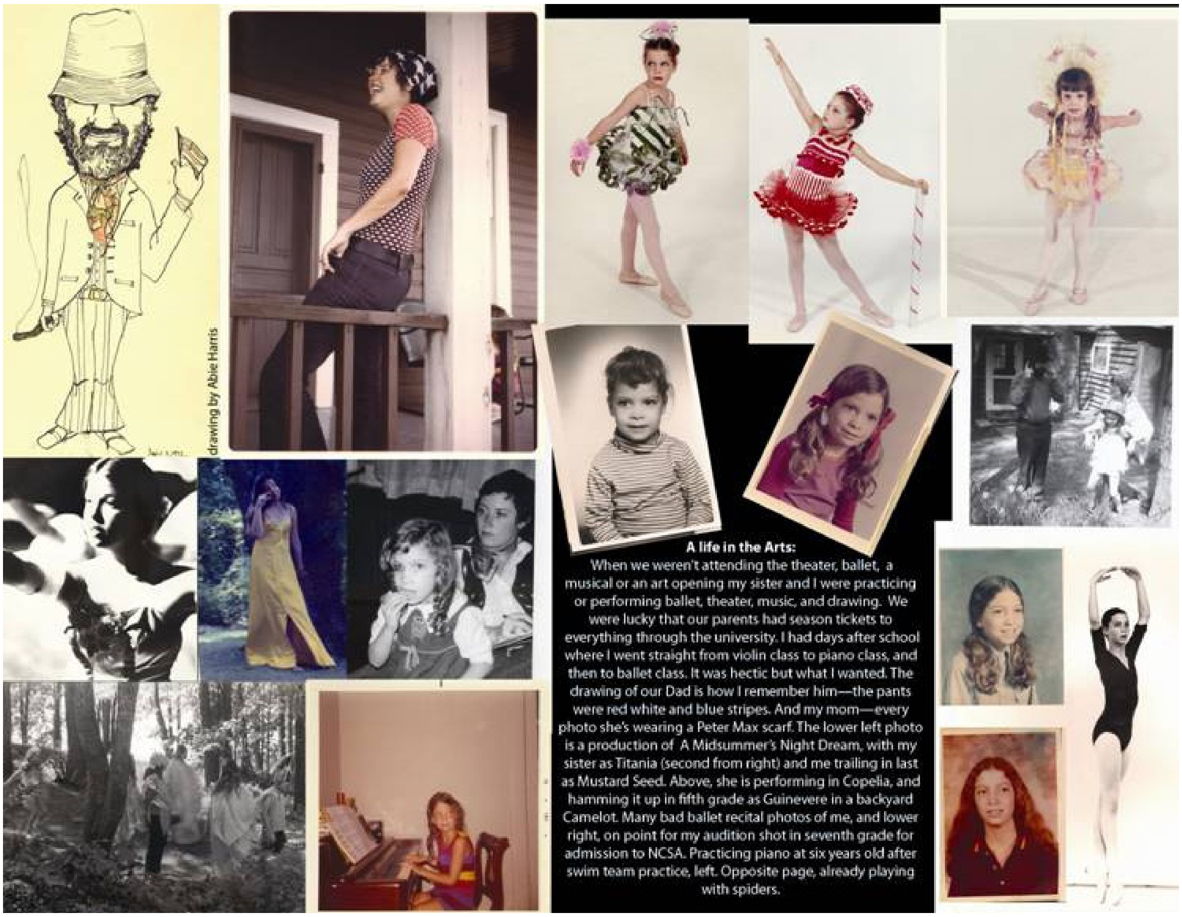
Times Photos by Martin R

Two hands take a break in a four-handed duet

music teacher Betsy Hannah watches Shawna Reynolds and Lisa Hoffman

Music Recital in Nightclub? You Be

above: Yseult practicing for Frog and Nightgown gig, 1971 in Raleigh, North Carolina That's her in the striped shirt! below: Collage of Yseult's early years with her sister and parents in the mix, *I'm In The Band,* pg. 3



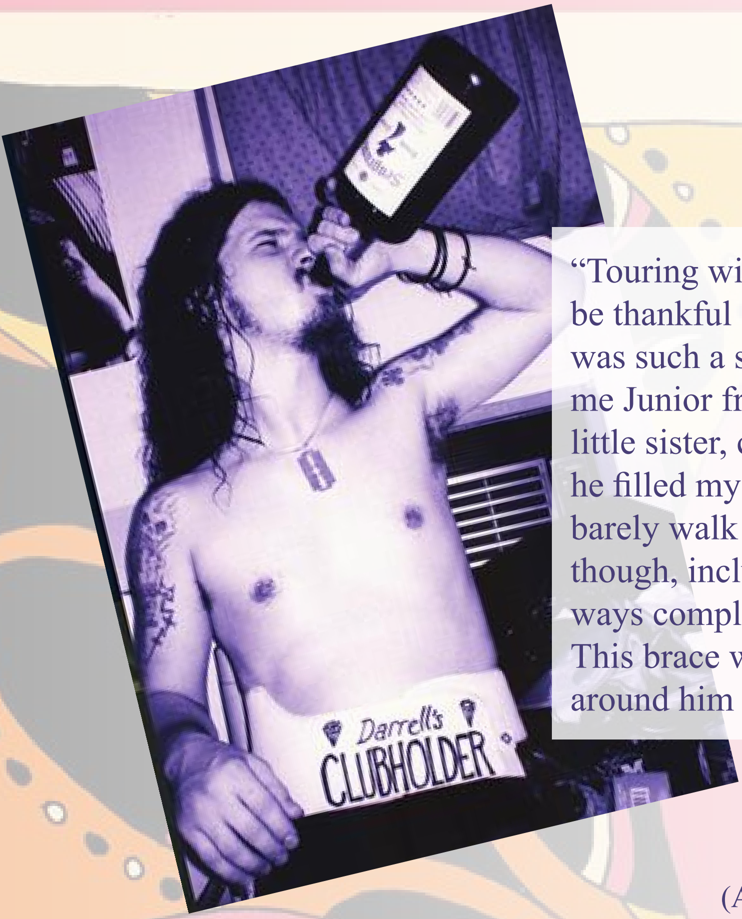
A life in the Arts:

When we weren't attending the theater, ballet, a musical or an art opening my sister and I were practicing or performing ballet, theater, music, and drawing. We were lucky that our parents had season tickets to everything through the university. I had days after school where I went straight from violin class to piano class, and then to ballet class. It was hectic but what I wanted. The drawing of our Dad is how I remember him—the pants were red white and blue stripes. And my mom—every photo she's wearing a Peter Max scarf. The lower left photo is a production of A Midsummer's Night Dream, with my sister as Titania (second from right) and me trailing in last as Mustard Seed. Above, she is performing in Copelia, and hamming it up in fifth grade as Guinevere in a backyard Camelot. Many bad ballet recital photos of me, and lower right, on point for my audition shot in seventh grade for admission to NCSA. Practicing piano at six years old after swim team practice, left. Opposite page, already playing with spiders.

SEAN YSEULT — ROCKSTAR • DESIGNER • WRITER

ArtSync: All of us who have read I'm In The Band *know you're a bit of a prankster. Could you share a few of your favorite pranks you played while on tour?*

Yseult: That was such a huge part of touring. I definitely always enjoyed a good prank. You know, a lot of them weren't that great, because it was just what you could find backstage. It was always so silly, but one time we were on tour with Pantera, I think we were in St. Louis. Anyway, it was an old theater and it turned out they had a snow machine that was fully loaded, and Pantera made it snow at the end of the White Zombie set, and man, we were getting that fake snow out of our Marshall's and SVT's for months after that. Another time, we were on tour with Danzig and Kyuss, and we had Domino's come and deliver a pizza to Kyuss on stage. I think we were kind of afraid to prank Danzig. [*Laughs*] There was the time there were actual police working as hired security guys at this show we were doing — Supersuckers with The Ramones, and we had the cops come out and handcuff and arrest Dan Bolton, the guitarist while he was on stage. They just kind of dragged him away before he could finish his guitar solo. Probably one of the better pranks I pulled, and again they were always so silly. We had toured with Pantera so much that Dimebag Darell and I got to be really good friends. He was kind of like a brother to me, and he was pranking me constantly. So this one time I got his roadie to go on his bus and get his Nine Inch Nails t-shirt he always wore, one of his hats and one of his guitars. I even had his shorts. I put his whole outfit on while he was on stage. I used to collect these troll dolls, you know, those little dolls with the hair that stands up, and I had one with hot pink hair, so I just snipped it off and taped it on my chin. Toward the end of their show, I went out on stage and got up right next to Dimebag with my Darell outfit and his guitar strapped on. I had learned this little thing he called the "boot-scootin dance," so I went out there and did the boot-scoot dance with him — that was pretty funny. I think that made it on one of the Pantera videos. We had so much fun together. Another time we pranked Pantera in Japan. We had an entire banquet table with a sushi dinner brought out on stage in the middle of one of their sets. They called our bluff and in the middle of their song — still playing and singing, they jumped on top of the table and proceeded to start a food fight. I don't think the Japanese audience had ever seen anything like it. We apparently upset a lot of the people, you know, the organizers of it. We had no idea, I guess it was kind of an insult playing with the food they had prepared. We felt bad afterwards, but it was fun while it happened.



I'm In The Band, pg. 127:

"Touring with Pantera was always a blast, and I will always be thankful for meeting this insane cast of characters, Darrel was such a special person and friend to me — he nicknamed me Junior from the get go, and from the then on I was the little sister, constantly getting pranked and picked on. Twice he filled my engineer boots mid-set with pennies; I could barely walk across the stage. I got him back many times though, including with the clubholder above: he would always complain about his "club," his word for his stomach. This brace was my remedy for his problem, and I slapped it around him on stage one night!" —Sean Yseult

Darrell Lance Abbott a.k.a. Dimebag Darrell
August 20, 1966 — December 8, 2004
(A founding member of Pantera and Damageplan)

SEAN YSEULT

The first tour was also with Trouble.
Above, all three bassists: Ron (Trouble), Rex and me.

PANTERA
VULGAR

Touring with Pantera, *I'm In The Band,* pg. 59

Clockwise from right: Darrell wearing my "Clubholder"; Tongs, me and Darrell getting into heavy machinery trouble backstage; Darrell's birthday party backstage; Rex, me Darrell, Mike, and Brian (eyehategod) in Pantera's dressing room after the show; Mike (eyehategod), me in wig and Darrell.

I'm In The Band, pg. 127

Yseult hangs with Coffin Joe in Brazil
I'm In The Band, pg. 133

ArtSync: Best audience? I mean, that's probably hard to answer, because you don't want to say or use the better fans card, but where do you think you were received the best, and what surprised you the most?

Yseult: Probably the most unexpected was when we did a Festival in Europe. We hadn't really sold that many records in England, I don't think, and we weren't sure if people really liked us there, but the crowd just went nuts. The first show was at Castle Donnington and there were 80,000 people, so it was like this sea of fans moshing and singing along with us, and it was just amazing. I think that was the most surprising. Like you said, I hate to pick one audience over another, but in America the crowds in Texas were always great. Detroit was just insane for us. That was always a lot of fun — we were playing huge places in Detroit much sooner than we were playing in other big cities. Japan was great. The Japanese are amazing people. They are very giving and sweet — so polite, and they would just line up outside our hotel to present us with gifts. It was incredible. That was probably one of the most special experiences for me personally. But as far as crazy audiences go, I'd have to say, 80,000 Metal Heads at Castle Donnington and the 300,000 people down in Brazil. That was pretty insane.

ArtSync: How do you even breathe in front of a crowd like that?

Yseult: I always would get nervous before I went on stage, but when the crowd is that big it kind of turns into a sea of ants, it's like a big blanket of people. It's almost less intimidating than playing a small club with three people than when you have 300,000 people, because you can't really see any one face that well, but the surge of energy coming from that many fans is so intense. It's such a crazy adrenaline rush. It just fires you up and keeps you going.

ArtSync: Well, the book is amazing and props on the cover. Awesomeness all around — very beautifully done. I'm grateful that you took the time to answer some questions for us. Our readers are gonna love it!

Yseult: Thank you so much. I really enjoyed the interview. Really great questions so I appreciate it. •

Yseult at Castle Donnington, 1995

photo by DJ White

Sean Yseult — ROCKSTAR • DESIGNER • WRITER

photo by Mark Anthony Lacy

Yseult with Husband, Chris Lee of Supagroup

photo by Lisa Johnson

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Shane Bugbee

The World's Biggest Troublemaker

interview by Christine Clemmons **RATED XXX**

Shane Bugbee, where do I begin? For starters he's an artist, writer, radio host, publisher, filmmaker and promoter. There's not a whole lot he hasn't had his hands in — mixing it up with his special blend of rarity, his pot is always full of yummy surprises. He's shocking at times, but the truth can do that to the masses. His outlook on life is refreshing, although it shouldn't be. I mean, it is what it is, but most of us are to busy running around slapping labels on things, while he's removing them and exposing what was already there in plain sight — the truth. Shouldn't that be the norm? I'm not saying I agree with everything Mr. Bugbee believes in, but that's the beauty of it, I don't have too. In fact, he spends a lot of time fighting for that very cause, so that you and I can openly express what we believe in. Shane is very familiar with the term "shut it down." I think he's come to expect it at every corner. The freedom to believe in, and create what you want without censorship, pretty much sums up his thought process.

As a publisher myself, I've had some real lows in this business. There's always a few that expect you to do and do without considering the full plate you already have in front of you. Instead of helping, they're much more comfortable with doing nothing…except exercising their pointer finger. Ha! Shane understands this all too well. I mean, if anyone knows the down and dirty aspects to this business, it's Mr. Bugbee. He's published over fifty zines and books combined. He's been on various talk shows, including Jerry Springer, Nancy Grace, and even appeared on an *E! True Hollywood Story* segment. He's worked with the likes of Mike Diana, Dana Plato, and has been profiled in several publications including *Spin* Magazine. Not to mention his interview by the great George Petros (*ArtSync* Editor) featured in *Art That Kills*. Oh, and of course there are the numerous events he and his wife, Amy, have founded, promoted and made happen. Wait! There's also the blueberry soda pop, *Ely Soda*! Yum! Sometimes the doers of the world are in the backdrop never getting credit, and thought of as troublemakers. Yeah, that's Shane, he's a real trouble maker that one. Always watching out for fellow artists and reminding us of our basic human rights. A troublemaker who spends many hours a day researching and educating the world on environmental issues, among many other important topics of interest.

So kick back and pop some corn, because this is an X rated interview that will have you wishing you had a bar of soap and Mr. Bugbee's mouth at hand, or maybe, if you can see past the foul language, it will inspire you. And yes, those last few lines are the disclaimer for this interview. How can I censor the man who fights everyday to protect the freedom of speech and expression? Well, I could, but I don't wanna.

ArtSync: You've had a huge impact over the years on censorship. What was your first encounter regarding media and galleries – censorship in the public forum?

Bugbee: The first, as special as it is, isn't really what's so shocking. The shocking thing about being harassed for expressing one's self, sometimes crossing over into censorship, is that it never ends...at least for me it hasn't. The first time a printer ripped my paste ups — original boards. (I was publishing before PDF's and the entire digital age, so give me a fuckin break.) The funniest, was having to sign a paper with the city of Hammond, stating I wouldn't dress as, or represent Satan at an event my wife and I were promoting. The event revolved around a local author, Jean Shepherd and his film, *A Christmas Story*. I remember that it was the early harassment that built the rage that fueled my publishing career. Yep, it was the early ass-hats that fucked with me and made the Mike Diana books possible, and eventually made me a magnet for the books/zines others wouldn't dare to print or promote…and I loved it — rubbing their faces in it — publishing the worst of the worst. And if I have the chance, I'd do it again — publish material that fools and folk might want to kill or censor.

ArtSync: How about that Mike Diana? This was a bold move for you. The way I see it, you made a choice, and one that would be frowned upon no matter how you angled it to the media. Did you have to think about it, or was it instant?

Bugbee: I'd like to think, I THINK about everything I do, even if it's a gut reaction. With Mike Diana, it was instant and organic. I was angry when Mike told me he was going to take some time and ultimately quit doing what he did to get away from the heat. I just thought it was my obligation. [Laughs] For instance, I played pee-wee football, so I saw it as me picking up the censored ball and running with it, and when they tackled me, I'd toss the ball to someone like you, and you'd run with it. It was instant in a reactionary way, but at the same time, it was well thought out. I didn't like the fact that he was being picked on for expressing himself, and understood if they hurt him, they'd hurt me. I saw it as an attack on me, and everything I held dear. Freedom of expression is worth dying for, so what the fuck, why not publish an obscene book or 10?

A Peek Inside Shane's Studio

Shane Bugbee

ArtSync: We all have people who have influenced us throughout our lives. Can you give us a bit of background on some of the people you've influenced? I'd also like to know some of the people who have inspired you. I mean seriously Shane; you're a bit of a legend. Tell us how you've obtained some of this knowledge and then how you recycle it.

Bugbee: Yeow! I'm not sure I want to admit to any influence. That might be very incriminating. I wonder who even knows who truly influences them. Influence can spread so quickly and credit usually goes to the ones with money, the ones who exploit the idea/action, and the ones that admit it, how honest is it when spoken to your face? For all I know, the guy or gal who tells me I've influenced them could be looking for some sort of handout/attention/affection. I understand influence, and I try to influence those who might be listening to stand up, stand out and fight for the things you can't hold your tongue about. I'm all about influence over affluence. At a young age I understood I'd never have extreme wealth, power or fame, but I could and would have influence. As far as revolution goes, influence is really all you have. Bullets/violence only goes so far and the intent is lost, and most of the time perverted. I feel true influence is forever and it grows because it's alive. That's right, influence is alive and it thrives on desire. The D.J. Steve Dahl has always been a huge influence on me. I'd listen to him day in and day out. I definitely used him as a parental replacement. He's a very honest communicator, and his honesty influenced me to speak my mind. Steve Dahl is the DJ that Howard Stern ripped off, and a perfect example of what I'm talking about when I say, the ones who get the credit are the ones with the cash and/or resources. My wife has been a huge influence. Without her love, her understanding and strength, I'm not sure if I would have evolved the way I have. I fear I might have gone the way of the convict and I'm not saying that for some pussy, or to give my Amy a handout, I mean it. Her father was a fireman and her mother a librarian, so she helped me understand what I was doing wasn't BAD. Amy encourages me in most everything I do. Funny when you ask about influence — I remember reading Seconds Magazine. It had a huge impact on me, and the way I did/do interviews and publish. And that was in some way connected to your father, George Petros. I find out he's your father after meeting you, and being affected by your influence, your energy, your determination… so, talk about the wild world of influence. To pinpoint my influence is hard…early on it's really hate-filled. Today I'm more focused on me, and what I make, and interpreting the visions I have. One thing's for sure, for me, influence doesn't stop and I hope it never does. I can't imagine it ever could, I can't imagine a life without it, without being constantly amazed and excited about the future.

ArtSync: Your creations are beautiful! I've never seen anything quite like them. I really appreciate inventors/artists that reuse materials. We can find bones and other things that you've recycled in your pieces. Share this process with us, not how you make it, but why.

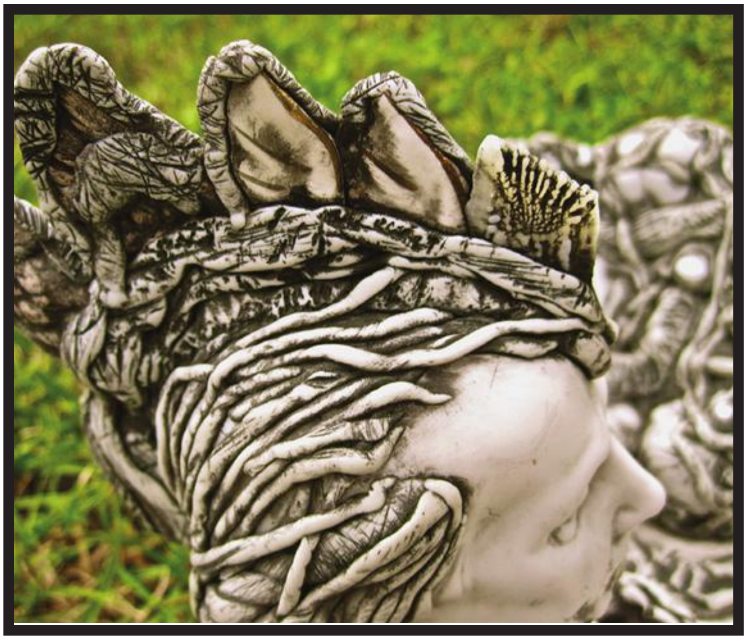
Bugbee: Why…funny you ask that. After I was run out of town on a rail, I went on a year long road trip to work things out. (ayearatthewheel.com) Once off the road and after a push from Dave Archer (the artist who was schooling me at the time), I started sculpting. I continued sculpting because I no longer wanted to do or say anything that might get me run out of another town. I no longer wanted to speak out — only act out thru the art I was now making. I found out it was better to quit trying to be understood rather than quit trying to understand, which is what I do when I speak out — I want to understand and be understood all at once. After I made my first 10 pieces they were misunderstood and just as shocking, if not more shocking to others…so I gave up trying to be understood. All I can do is be me.

ArtSync: Do you experience bouts of depression and anxiety? How do you handle it — keep it calm?

Bugbee: Depression, anxiety, anger, angst, rage - yes! Yes! Yes!!!! And it's worse when I'm not making stuff. So there you go. I create, and therefore I calm my hate. I always thought that if my father was creative with art, he wouldn't have had to be so creative with the belt and beatings. Creating helps me commune with my angry/depressed/confused self. Creating is how I see deep…it's my ritual, my magic.

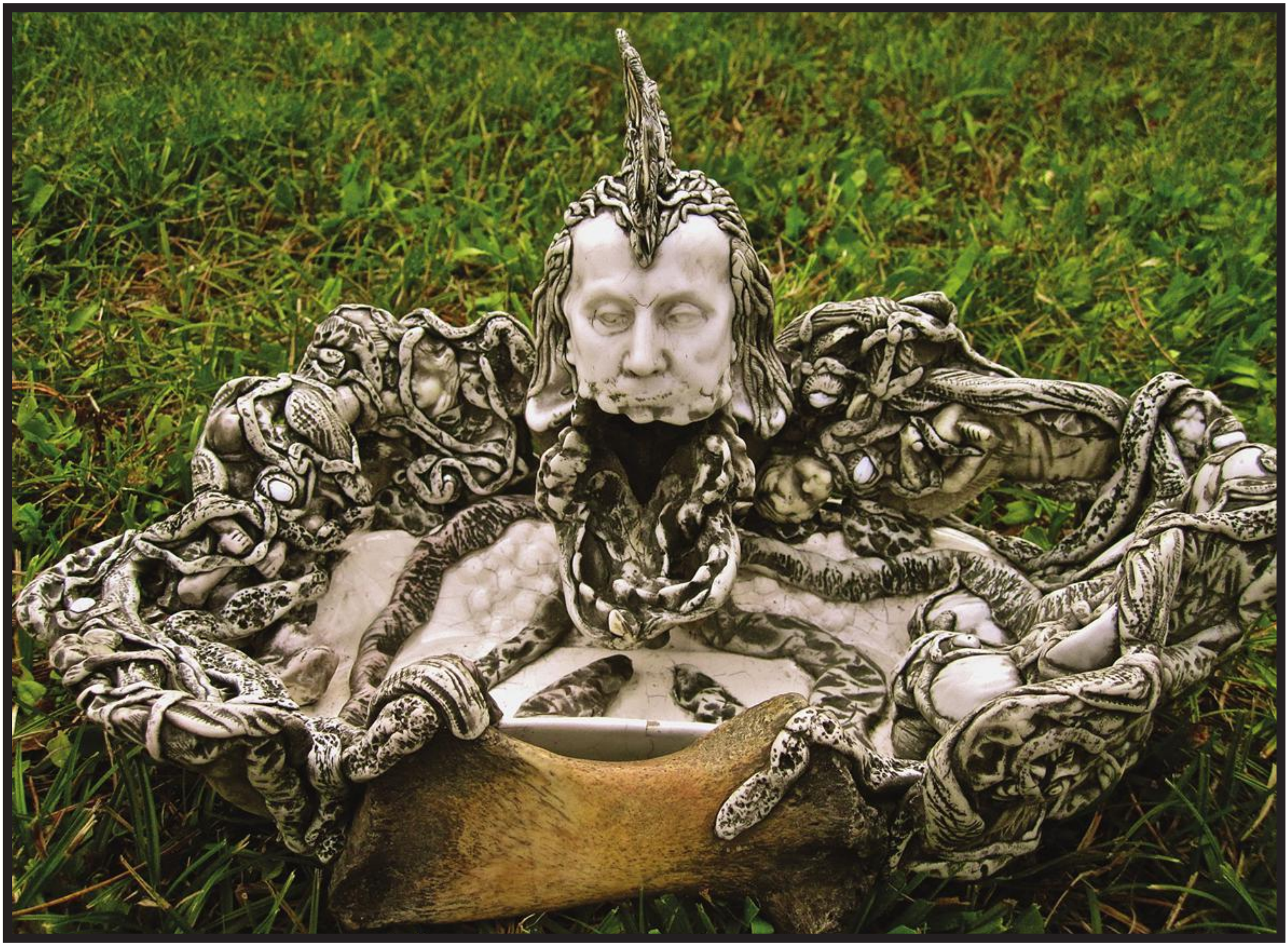
ArtSync: How about your early years at home? Describe to our readers the years that impacted you the most when it came to your family and how it affected your personal choices.

Bugbee: Hmmm…that's a hard one…so many things and events shape who and what you are. My parents were ignorant, abusive fuck-tards, so there's that. I'm a product of the early suburbs, so I watched farmers get displaced and farms burned/torn down only to build up a bunch of box-like homes that looked the same. I recall going around town spray-painting lyrics from the RUSH song *Subdivisions*. I spent my summers at the family funeral home, helping my Uncle Jim pick up bodies and set up flowers. That definitely affected me. I remember poking my finger at a dead guy's cheek while he laid in his coffin. The make-up my uncle used to cover up the cancer sores crumbled. I freaked out — jumped 10 feet in the air and ran. The divorce that took my parents years to get, years of constant abuse, being forced into Catholic school (as one of the punishments, the school made me kneel on dried beans in a corner), and eventually being kicked out of Catholic school for acting out is a start. Also, my best pal catching me whacking off and telling the entire school, and because of that, I lost the girl… never getting the girl — always being that close and never getting the girl, until that is, I started following my heart, my path. Once I started doing what I needed and wanted, it seemed the girls eventually came along. So getting the girl was a distant goal — love, affection and the lack of love and affection, and the need for love and affection…I would say all of the above was a maximum impact on my life.

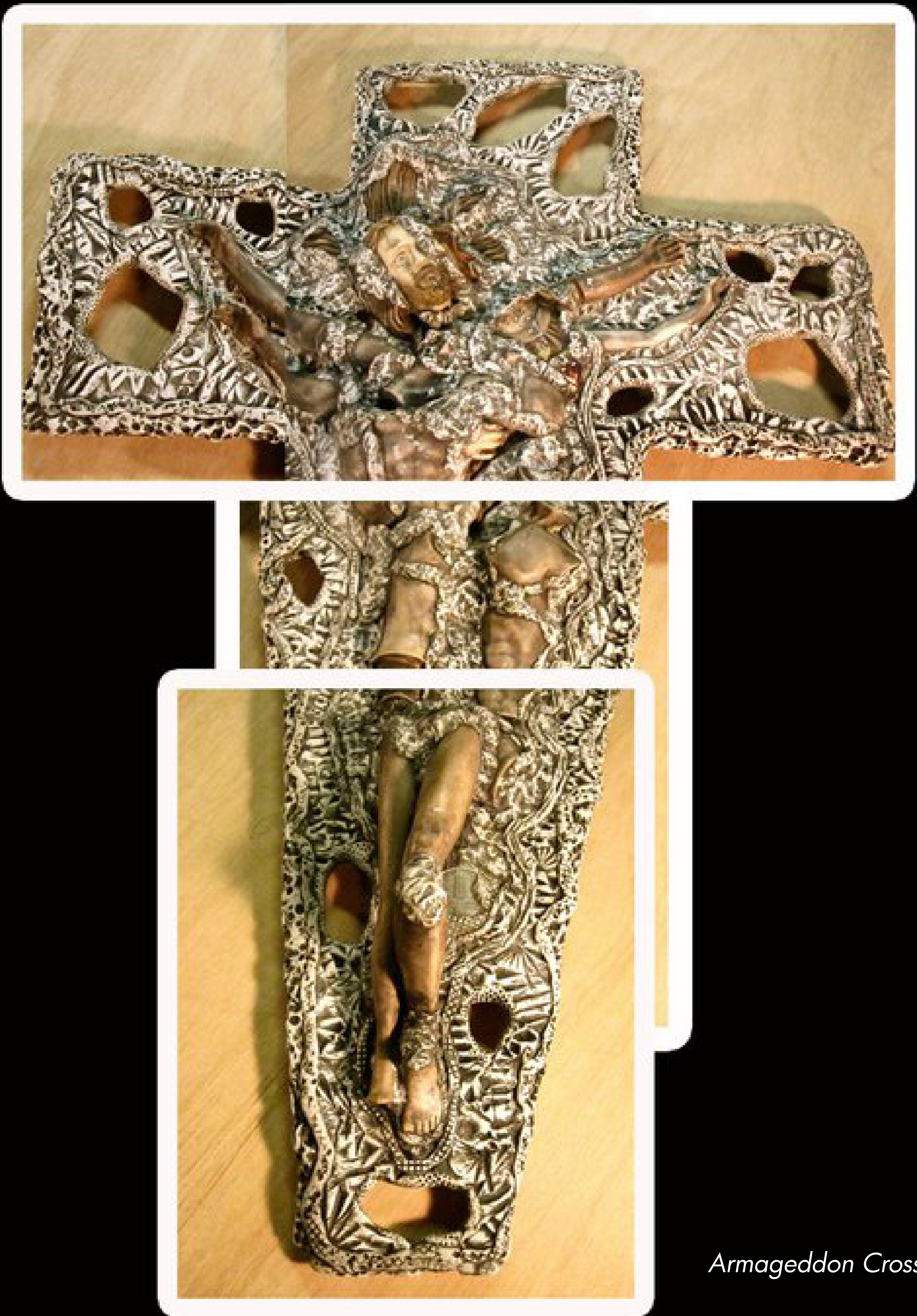


God Helps Those Who Help Themselves

materials: sea shells, porcelain broken figurine angel wings, smashed angel figurines, a shark tooth, smashed christian collectible, porcelain bells, and bones that Shane found on the beach where he lives.



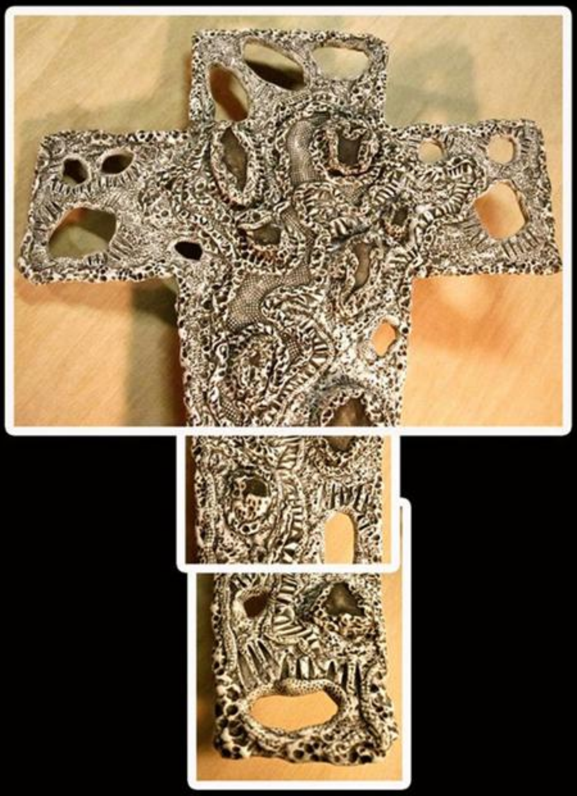
Shane Bugbee

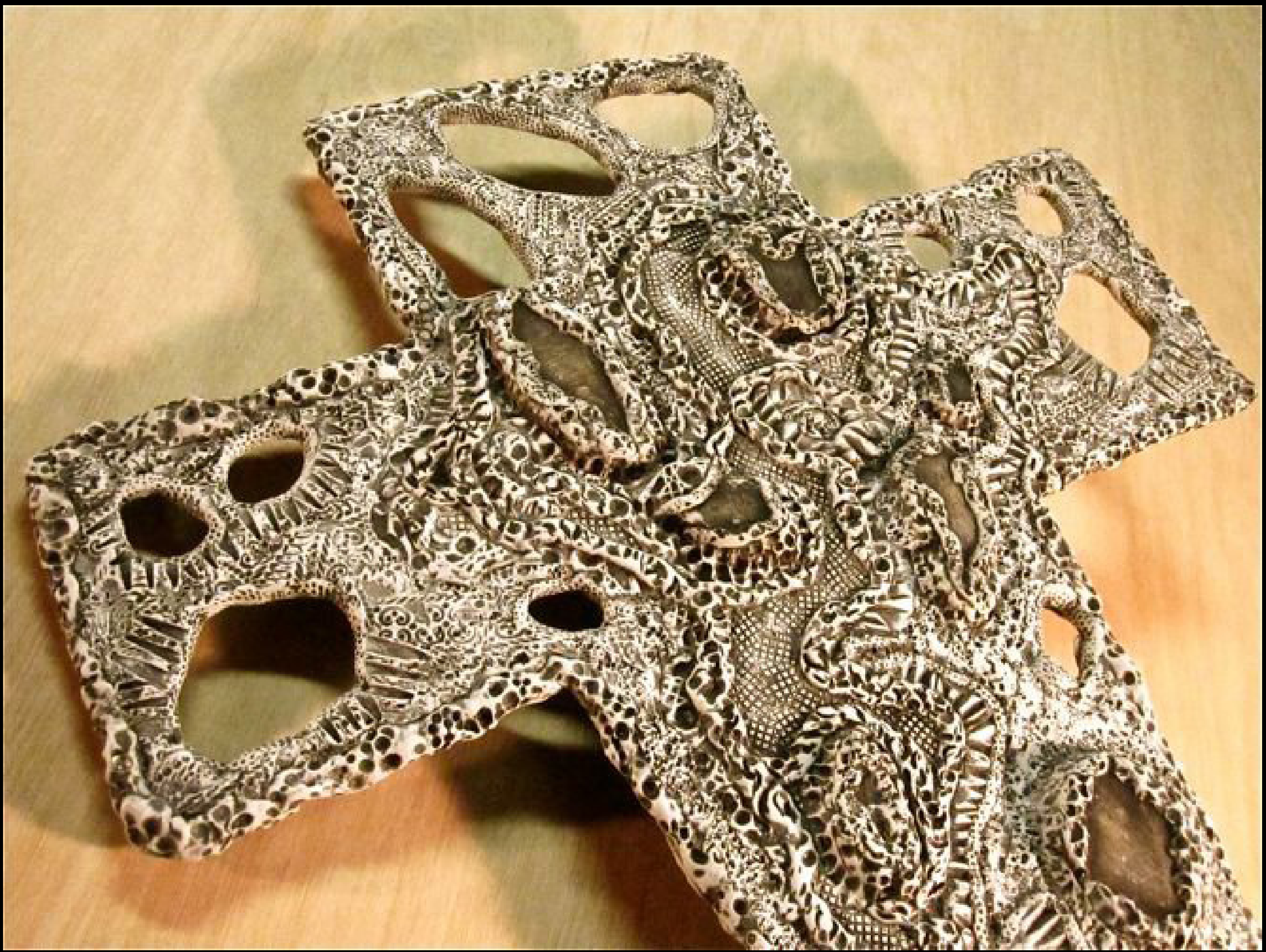


Armageddon Cross #1

Armageddon Cross #1

materials: ‘the clay’ smashed jesus figurine, porcelain doll parts and wood from a destroyed church pew.





close-up, backside

Shane Bugbee

ArtSync: I know I might regret this from the stance of a publisher, but from an editor's viewpoint, I'd like to hear your thoughts on Satanism. Most people hear this word and it's all they can do not to revert into themselves, hiding from whatever content may follow. I get that you're an Atheist, but you do hang with a certain crown…right? There are questions. Is there a nutshell version you can crack for us?

Bugbee: The S word…. yeow! The S word got me run out of town, the S word ain't nothing to clown around with, and that's for sure. For me, SATAN is a word, that's it. Satanism to me is a philosophy more than a 'religion'. I've always looked at it, the Church of Satan, as a political and artistic movement along the same lines as the American Indian Movement, the Black Panthers or the Yippies…all of whom played out their politics on the world stage…The Theater of the Absurd and LaVey was part of that, and it seems he picked one hell of a subject, pun intended. Religion is a subject most won't touch, won't talk about and as you allude to…they run for cover. I'd say Satanism is great for the young atheist and truth seeker. It's a great start, but not the be all end all. Satanism is a logic based philosophy, and the Satanic Bible is one of the greatest self-help books. The ones who run from it or shun it, show their ignorance and unwillingness at the very least to understand their enemy. What kind of spiritual warrior are you if you don't understand your enemy? Let me tell you…you're the past, you're obsolete and no longer needed….in order to evolve as a species, we must call these weak willed so-called spiritual warriors out for being nothing more than car salesmen, and manipulators creating more and more weak sheep that suck down our resources and create nothing more than a grease mark. I'm not an enemy of folks on a spiritual journey or who consider them self spiritual. The only belief system I've found that seems ok is Buddhism, and a lot of what I understand about the Native American spiritual beliefs.

ArtSync: You're a fellow publisher. It's been nice having someone who relates outside of the ArtSync team. I want all your fabulous secrets! Cough them up! At least two!

Bugbee: Never give credit. Never give in. Give them double the rope to hang themselves with later, for when they do let you down, and they will. Always place a value on your time and space and no matter who, always let them know the value. Never let them guilt you, understand your intent and move forward. Once you hear from the wanna-bees about how you don't pay the writers, move along and move without them, they'll never understand that publishing, especially today, is a labor of love, and they'll never have the work ethic to do anything more than complain anyway. So fuck them. And never cave in to advertisers, it's a sure way to be forgotten, lose readership and go out of print.

ArtSync: Wow, that's some pretty deep and honest advice. Thank you! Ok. Let's get dirty. You are what you are. If I were to sum you up, and I kinda am, I'd say you're a pretty down to earth guy. I'd say that you call it how you see it. You seem pretty fearless to me. Where does this come from, and how has this attitude affected you in the negative?

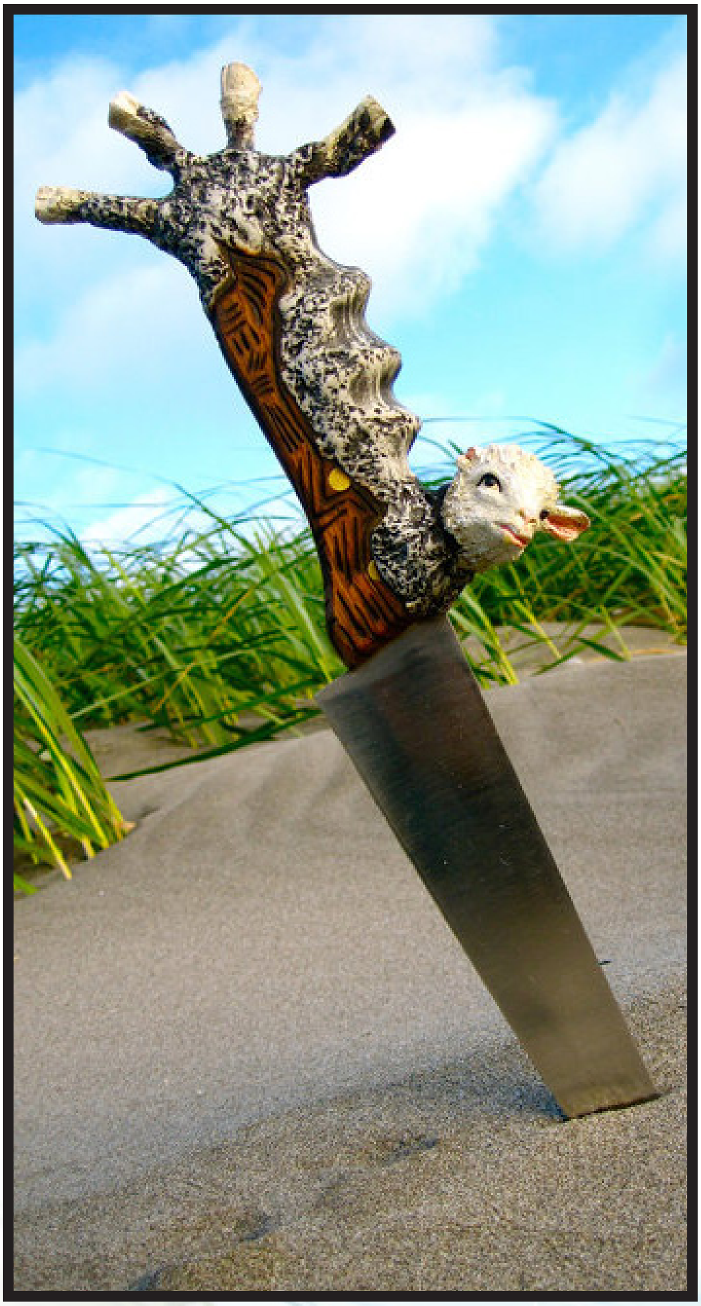
Bugbee: Come from? Hmmm. I don't know. I've never deviated from my path and have never felt anything but an extreme desire to follow that path. How does it affect me in the negative? In many ways — from purposeful hair and spit in my food…to landlords, cops and teachers bullying me. They try to affect me and they do at times, but it's seldom and short lived. The further along the path I go, the harder it is for me to be derailed, or be affected by the do-nothings and haters, but in general it has brought nothing but awesomeness to my life… really. I live a life I could have never imagined in a million years, and I believe it's only because I follow my path and will destroy those who try to get in my way. So really, all negative turns to influence, or stokes the fire of determination and therefore it is positive.

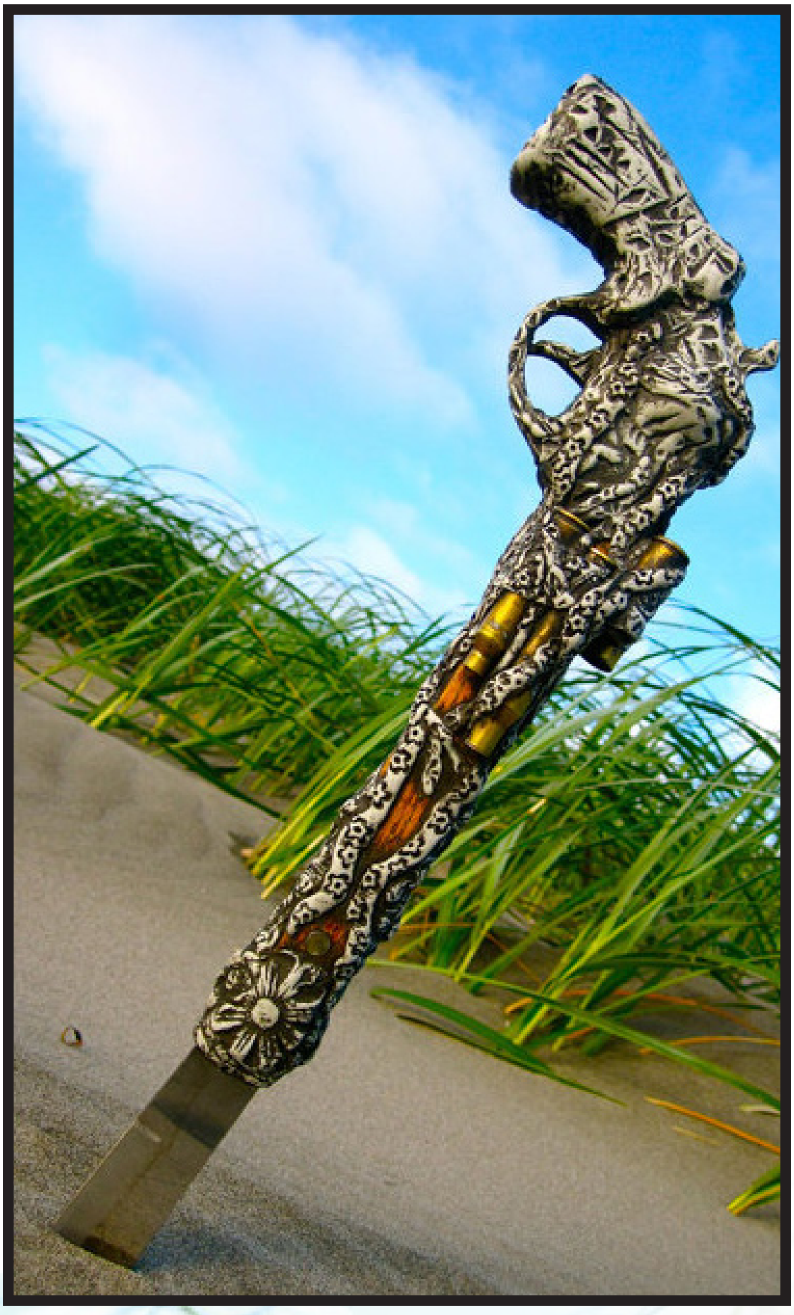
TERROR
WORLDWIDE

Shane at work in his studio

shanebugbee.com

Play Knife Series





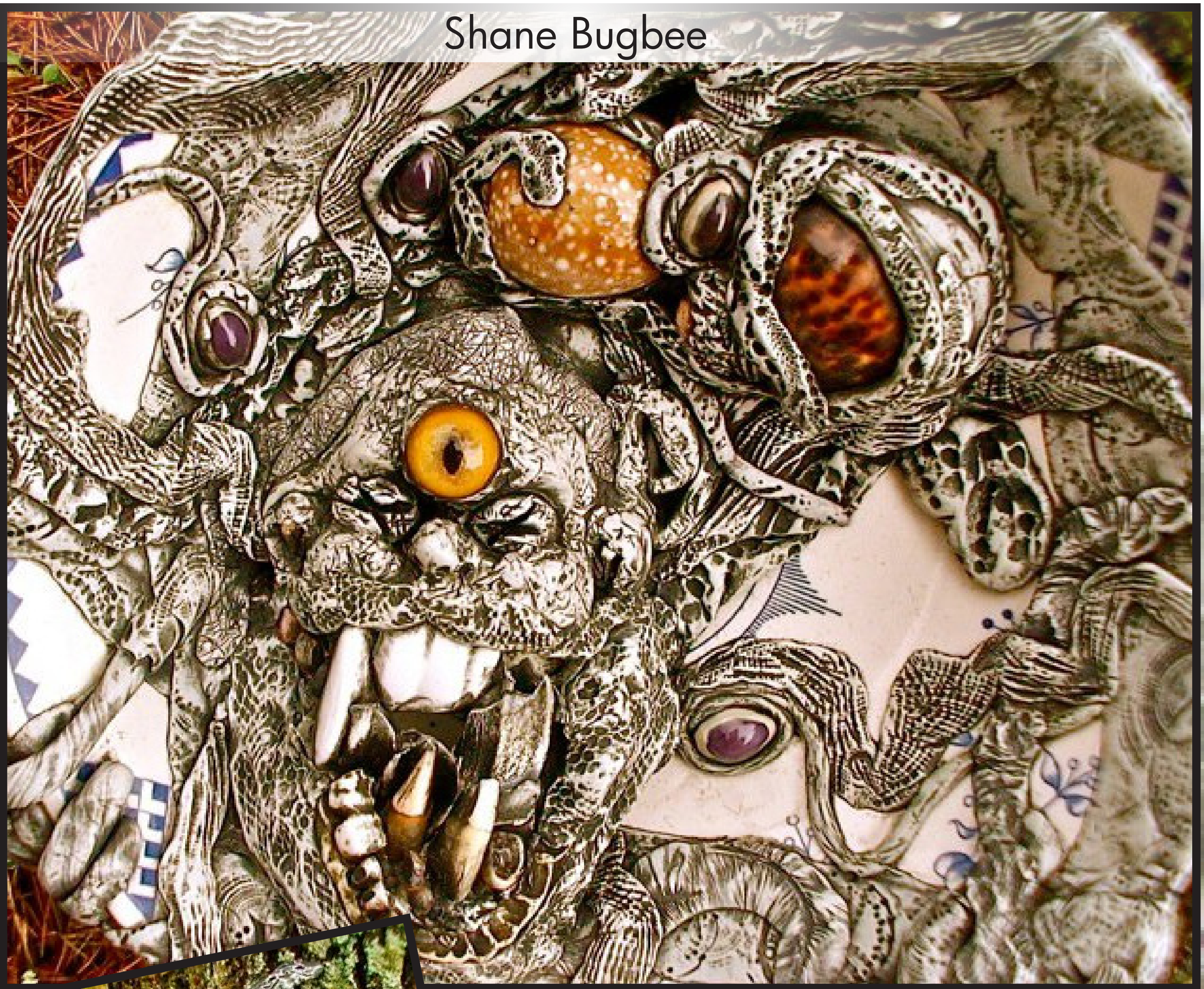
Sheep

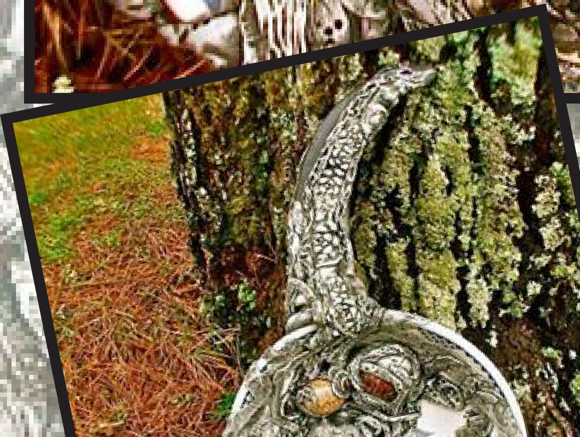
materials: 'the clay,' thrift store knife, and a broken sheep figurine.

Flour Power

materials: 'the clay,' thrift store knife, spent bullets, and a broken toy gun handle.

Shane Bugbee





The Power Of The Third Eye

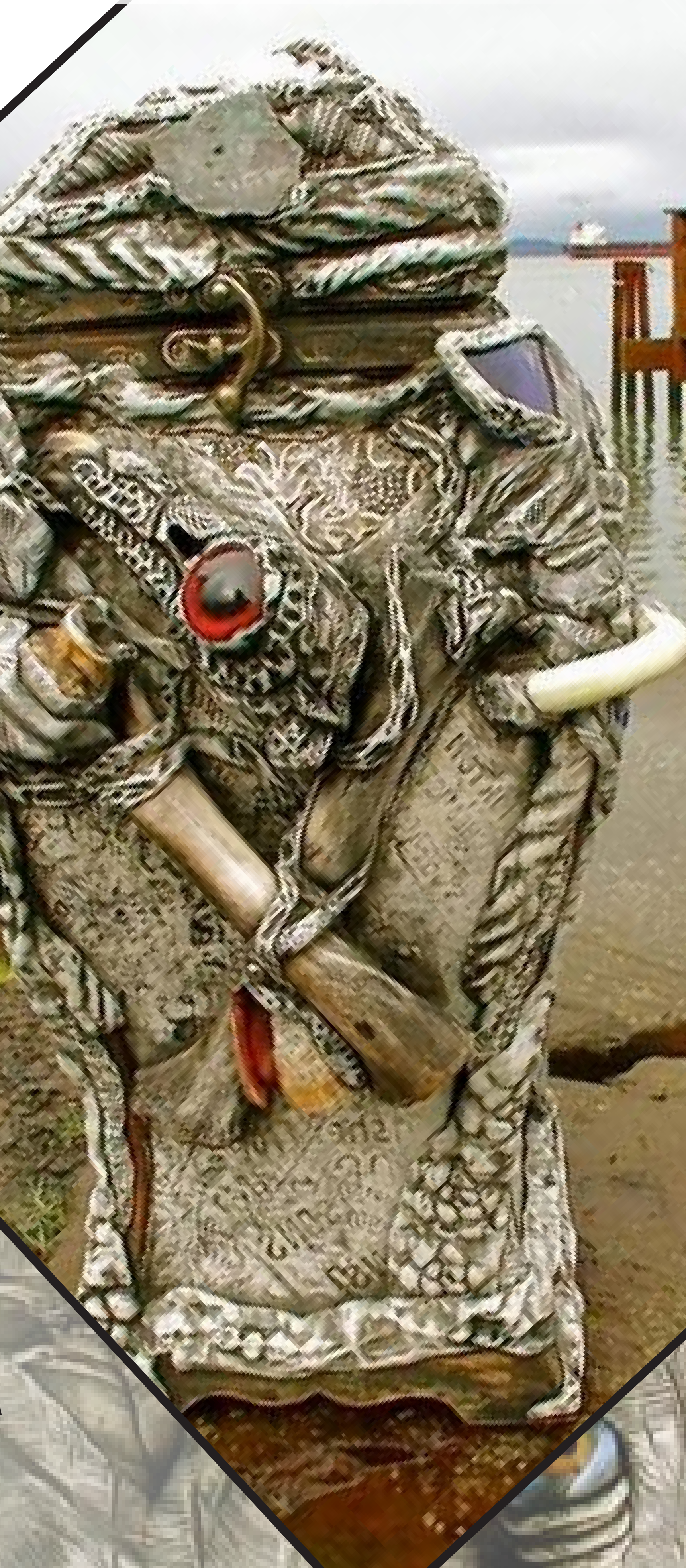
Self Portrait

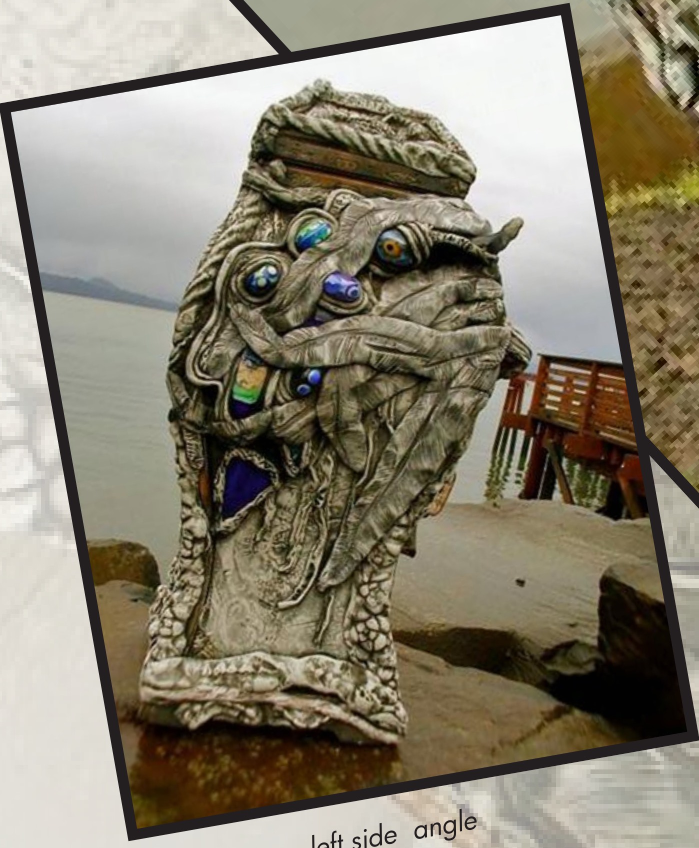
materials: ‘the clay,’ bull horns, sea shells, bear teeth, buffalo teeth — Shane also mixed some of his own hair into the clay.

The Curse Of The Incorrigible Maman-ti

Prophet of the Bird, of the Feather, of the Sky

materials: 'the clay,' bird & deer bones,
dirt from Maman-ti's grave, Dave Archer's
glass beads, sea shells, skull of a hawk,
glass from a smashed bird feeder,
blue glass, pieces of a ship wreck
and a handful of talismans.





left side angle

Shane Bugbee

ArtSync: Tell us about your radio program and why we should listen.

Bugbee: To me, it's no different than anything else I do, whether its sculpture or filmmaking, it's all about expression and understanding. I've done various radio type shows. I did the first 24 hour internet broadcast. It's all about understanding — me trying to understand those I have on, and thru that trying to understand me and hopefully growing as an individual. It's really all about me and I'm not sure who would be into listening to that…except for me that is. I'm not sure I'm comfortable asking anyone to listen. It's all talk and its all mania, meaning it's all over the place…like any conversation that goes down in my presence. I do this show for me to document things I think should be recorded…it's long form and isn't set to today's attention span.

ArtSync: Ok. Stripping away all the censorship and bullshit for a moment, can we focus on bright, happy and cheery things that give us all the comfort of sleeping easy? In your perfect world (not to assume it's anything but perfect for you), what are the things that make you happy, besides yummy food?

Bugbee: Well, everything in my life…IS my life, and I look at it all as the same thing. Without the censorship and struggle I wouldn't have a fight to fight or the accomplishments or this interview, plus that attention/affection makes me happy. I love everything I do, and again, without the angst, what would fuel my art? What would creation be without the struggle to understand? Yeah, I love the life I have. Sex makes me happy. My friendship with my dog makes me happy. The beach makes me happy and so does ice cream. I like to ride my bike, and a great conversation is rare and, so I'm madly in love with a great conversationalist. In general I love making stuff and talking and sometimes listening, and we do an anti-art camp each year. We invite great conversationalists/artists and we hang, talk and make shit for a week or two. That I love, and hope never ends.

ArtSync: Look, its great when likeminded people connect, even if it's only in one form. What's your list, you know, your internal spec sheet for relating to other humans?

Bugbee: As far as human beings go, I can't seem to find too many I dig. Like 10 years ago I'd make sure to ask if a new maybe-pal liked Seinfeld or the Simpsons, if they said no, I knew I wouldn't like them. Today I don't watch too much TV. I try and stick to the creative class, the artists, the inventors…I shun the ruling class. The creative class will always trump the ruling class.

ArtSync: From one publisher to another, in the world of art, how do we co-exist between the dark and light? Is it possible to have all of these things in our publication and keep everyone happy?

Bugbee: The world of art could care less about yours or any other belief system, they only care about quality and technique, and then once in a while something in the art world will catch the eye of the populous/mainstream and will be torn apart, bastardized, exploited or censored, and you as a publisher — it's your responsibility to lay it all out for the reader to decide. Who cares if they're upset? Maybe they should be. Maybe that will inspire them to create the change they want because you certainly can't create change if you don't understand what's going on around you. And for me, I learn so much more when I'm forced to confront subjects that are out of my focus or understanding. •

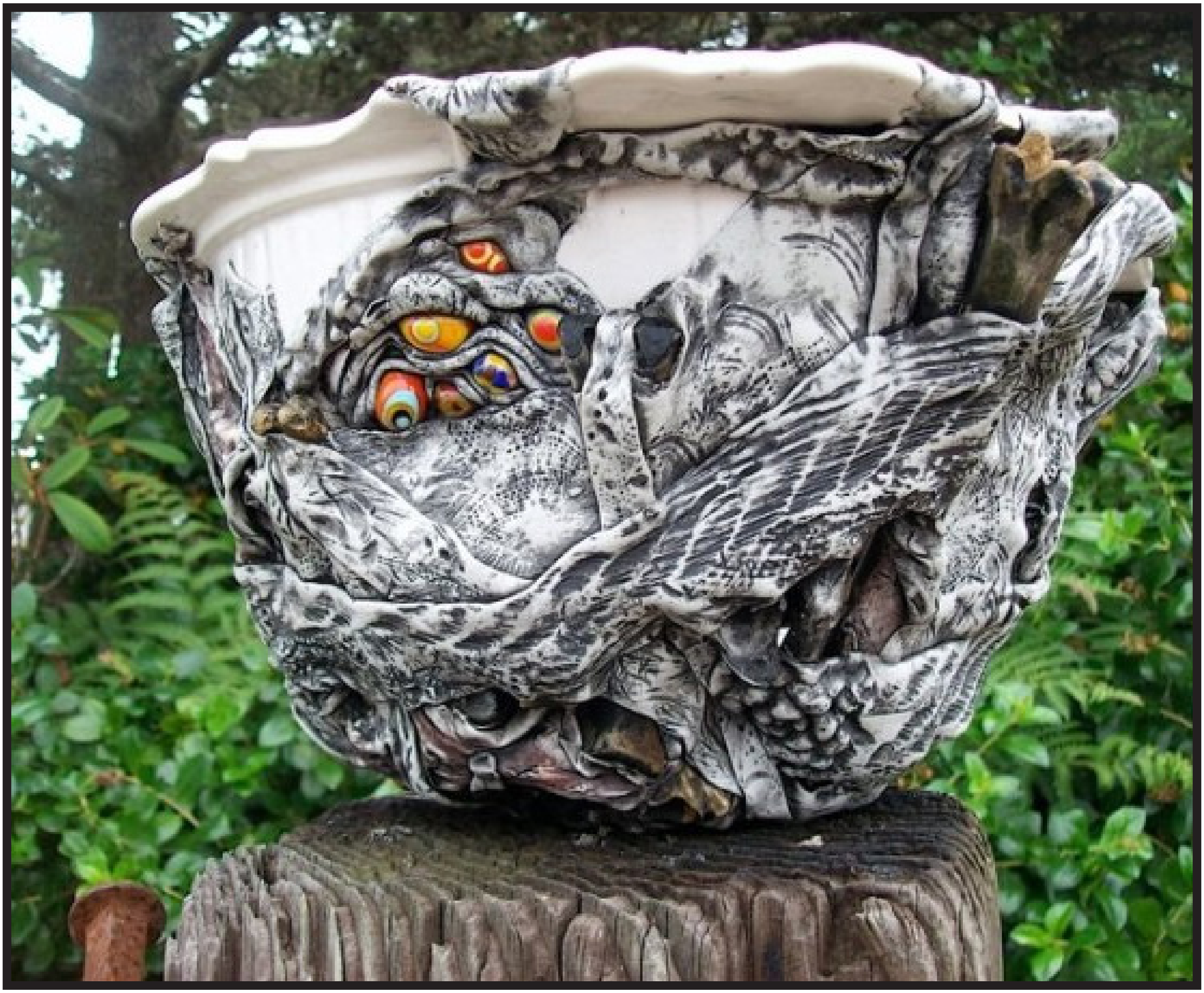
Keep up with Shane at:

shanebugbee.com

&

ayearatthewheel.com

shanebugbee.com



Rose Bowl 13

materials: 'the clay,' smashed patriotic punch bowl, hand made Dave Archer beads, and bones Shane found along the roadside in Roseburg, Oregon.

Shane Bugbee and his wife, Amy are always up to something yummy. Check out their facebook!

facebook.com/shaneandamy

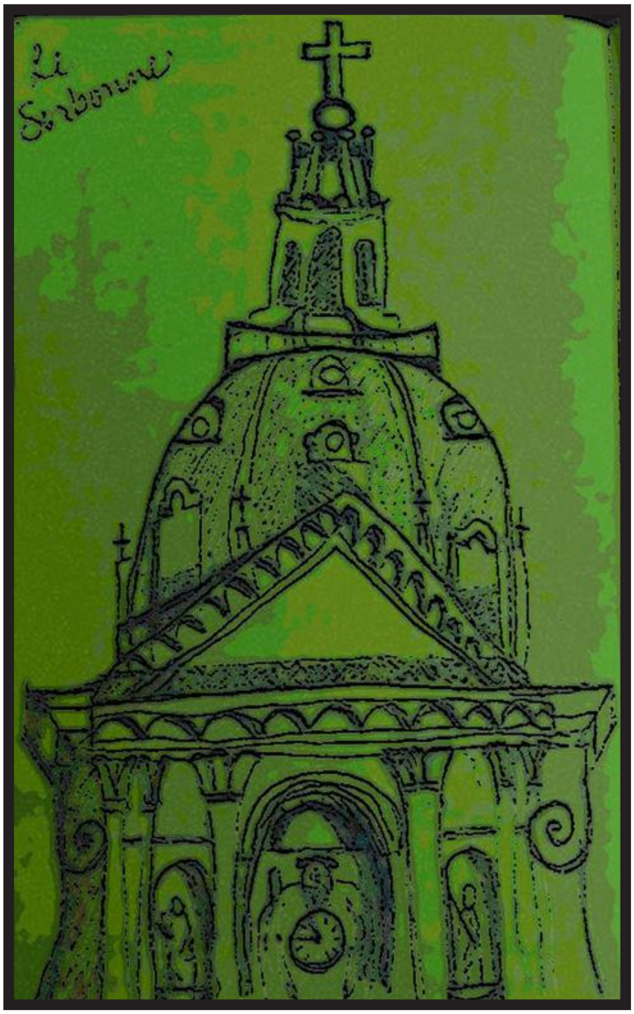
Paris Changed Everything

by Karen Johnson

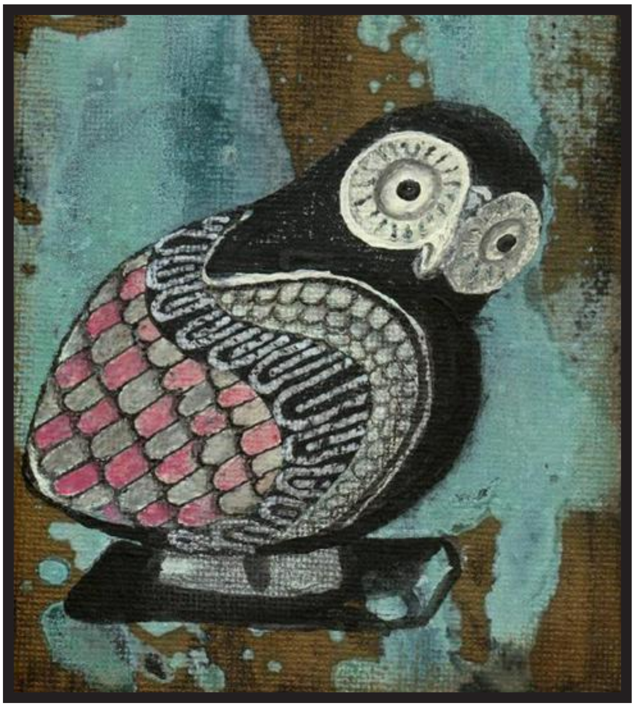
A virtual door opened to a real world opportunity and I ran tripping over the threshold. Of course I wanted to go to Paris! I knew it would change me; I hoped it would improve my art. I didn't know it would change everything.

I didn't study French. No way would I learn it in a month. I re-studied Art History. I dusted off my art tome, found my notes in it, and read the relevant sections. I had no intention of spending all my time in museums. I knew Paris was saturated with art.

I wanted to see what Modigliani saw. I wanted to sit for a future famous artist. I wanted to haunt Pere LeChaise, and these things I did. I romanticized about leisurely sipping cafe au lait, and those darling bits of sugar they come with, though I don't take my coffee sweet. Sitting at the cafe I could absorb everything in photo, drawing or verse. In this regard, however, Paris had other plans for me.



Can Draw
by Karen Johnson

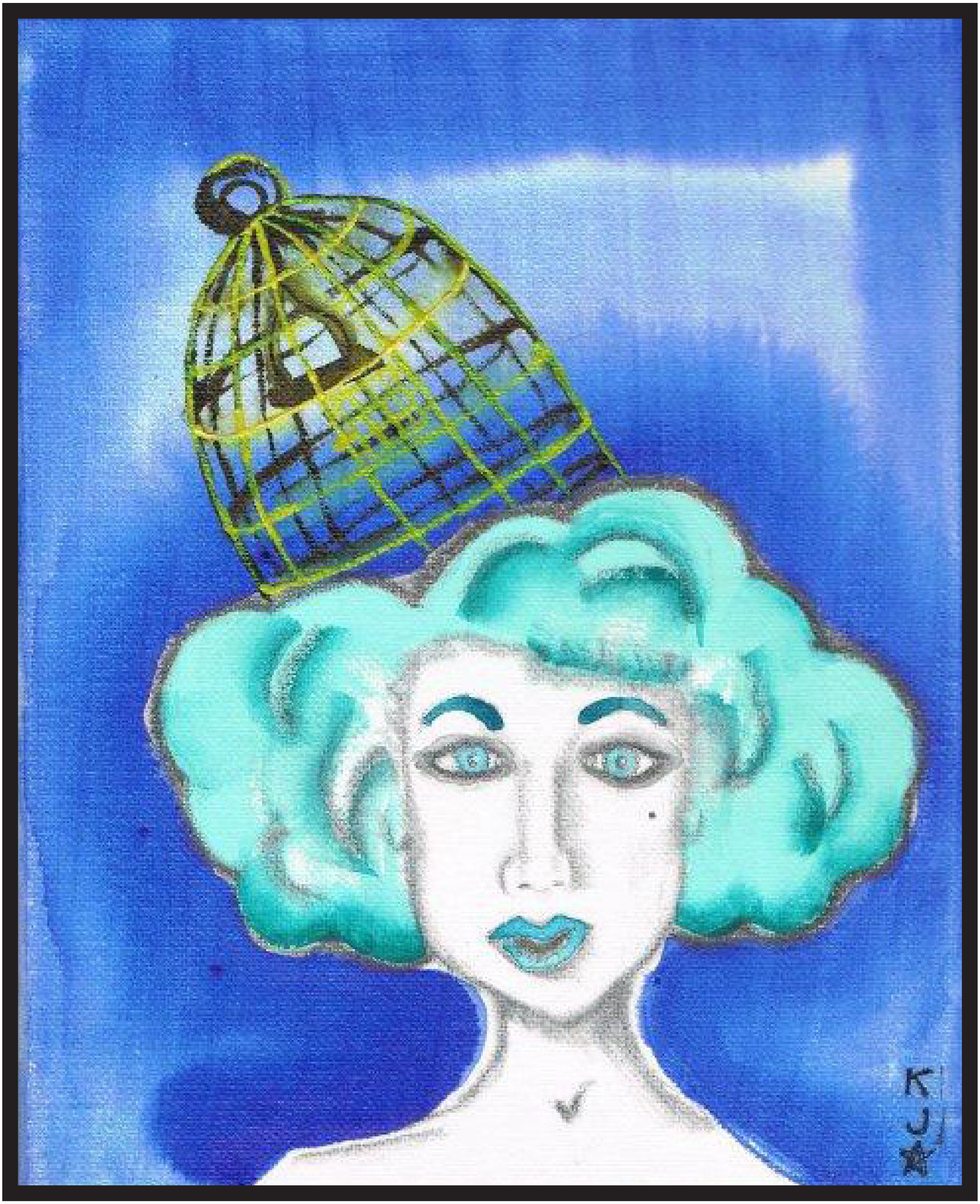


Louvre Owl
by Karen Johnson

Instead I walked. I am glad I did. Although Paris and I are blood sisters, I fear my feet will never recover. Paris was gritty; it was a black and purple haze with old instruments in shop windows. It was five Euro store fantastic and discount shopping in the dark. It was Salad Grand on the Rue de Abbess and pear tart with champagne in a travel mug. I found I suddenly saw the light about Starbucks, since theirs was the only coffee available to go. I was only ashamed for a moment. *Ok, I'll try it with that adorable sugar.*

I crashed in a flat in Choisey le Roi, took the train to Tours and spent two days in Amsterdam. I took 1,000 pictures and vowed to paint them all. Things I had seen before in books began to take on shape, space and weight. I started to think about my art differently, and it affected the way I thought of my life. My choices took on a color and my longings a tone, like a pattern coming into focus. I had never admitted to being an artist, but that changed as I sat sketching The Sorbonne. When done, I promised myself I would stop saying "I can't draw." I think I began to make art then.

So I saw the tombs of Chopin and Modigliani. I sat for a portrait by a man who captured me all too well. I met the most amazing locals who showed me what "the heart of Paris" really means. I sat fb flirting from the Rive Gauche and bought street art in front of The Pompidou. I learned more about myself than I did about art, like a bird escaping a cage. Paris changed everything. Oh how I fell in love! I even adore sugar with my coffee.



“I learned more about myself than I did about art,
like a bird escaping a cage. Paris changed everything.”

The Blue Bird
by Karen Johnson

facebook.com/oddgirlworld
oddgirlart.wordpress.com

Introducing: *Me and Myself, by I*
We want you to write about yourself, but from the prospective of your alter ego. HA! We are looking for unique and clever write-ups. For more details, visit: artsyncmag.com and click on EXHIBITS. Our first pick for this new segment is Nancy Alinovi! Congratulations Nancy!

CASHMERE SWEATS

A.K.A. A BEDTIME STORY

BY NANCY ALINOVI

The car will be arriving soon and I have to pick out some items I might need. Actually, I will probably not need anything at all, but part of me wants to think it is important that I make that decision. The reality is, I am selecting some things to make the ride and check-in more comfortable.

This is a new "procedure" I am about to experience or is it? (The use of the word "treatment" bothers me and it certainly is not a surgery of any kind.) What I like about it is that it sounds like an archaic indulgence. It evokes a glamour reserved only for a few privileged. At times, I have envisioned this event taking place in gray and white, probably due to my love of old movies.

When one has money, one does not have to go through the red tape of doctors, insurance nor medical necessity of any sort. Money does buy you what you want as long as it does not include happiness, self-fulfillment, self-esteem, or love of most kinds. I am tired and feel drained. You can love what you have and appreciate it, but sometimes that is not enough.

The drudgery of living, no matter how privileged, can get to anyone. After all, this is human life. So OK, I am not starving in a cardboard shack or have been abused by a parent, uncle, or cousin- so what? I still suffer; thank God, not like that, but in my own way. In fact, just the knowledge of all the horror that goes on in this world to anyone or any being is part of why I am where I am. Monotony, no less contemplation of unspeakable torture and suffering, is too much to handle and so is my life, apparently.

All has been arranged so nicely for I am not to worry about anything. It is hard to let go of people that depend on you for any length of time; for me anyway. Assured over and over, that all is going to be cared for by loved ones and paid ones and that it is all so clean, neat, and warranted, I release, let go and accept "you need this and want it" and the very frank, "it is available to you."

The house is in order, white, polished, and gleaming. I have packed a clean set of cashmere sweats to wear home, along with my face creams and favorite scents and a tad of makeup all packed by me, myself, in a wonderful large crocodile bag. Can I admit I am so very excited? The day, which has approached quickly, feels strange. No, I did not have to wake up early as if for an appointment. The pick-up was arranged to my time clock. Isn't that nice? It is really how it should always be. My time clock is my own.

OH MY.

I wake at an early 11:30 because I am unconsciously aware that today is different. Coffee and an egg ("It is OK; you can have breakfast"), a nice shower, the donning of a cozy cashmere sweater and matching cashmere pants, and a light application of make up and my favorite scent has me ready. I love my life, I do. Oh, and I take the pills in the envelope.

The black limousine pulls up and I don my sunglasses and stoically march out the door. The driver, standing outside, escorts me into his chariot and I climb into the cozy, black, leather cave. Anticipation can be the best (and sometimes the worst) part of life, and with the thought of relief, I am almost there. I feel so relaxed and "comfy." The pills are starting to work and the feeling they evoke is great. I am so OK with everything. My handbag feels like my lifeline, I appreciate life, and I know I am privileged, but cannot think of those that are not. I doze…about two hours later we arrive.

Oddly, the steps to my temporary home are reminiscent of my own home; white stone, possibly marble. However, being so very relaxed, I am not quite sure. Walking in, I feel like I am checking into a hotel or spa but that quickly changes as I am assigned a nurse, squat and friendly, who is asking me a barrage of questions. My hands stroke my cashmere-covered thighs in a slightly nervous way.

After my interrogation where I have been reassured many times "this is just routine and for your utmost comfort," I am finally led up to my room. We pad down the plush carpeted halls and I notice some beautiful sculptures positioned here and there, all evoking a sense of peace and comfort. Have I mentioned "comfort" previously? Oh yes, I probably did.

The elevator, decorated beautifully as well, hums ever so slightly, as we rise a floor or two. The soft spoken young woman who gently took over from the nurse is staring at the floor numbers as is so common in an elevator when one does not know what to say or where to look. I find this polite. I like polite.

The door finally opens to reveal a dimly lit hall, again carpeted; only this time, not quite as plush, it is a tad more commercial. This is, again, a slight reminder that this is a medical facility yet I get no less excited albeit it is now mixed with a bit of nervousness. Those pills are starting to wear off and as I briefly start to think of home, I realize we are headed toward my room. As we approach what it to be my door, I notice outside there is a small decorative table, counter height, with a dim bankers light and a small vase of flowers, which seem to be in front of a console of some sort of lights. I am escorted in.

My room is blue, decorated tastefully, yet sparsely, and I notice it has a slight eclectic feel and is, thankfully, not too modern or sterile. Vaguely, I remember being asked questions about my decorating preferences early in this process, although I never mentioned blue. The well-coifed woman quietly, yet warmly, tells me to get settled, and to put my few things away if I wish. She hands me two more pills and a glass of water she has poured from a bottle next on the table and tells me that "they" will be in to see me shortly. After taking the pills, I walk to the window and while holding the drapes aside look out onto rolling green fields with beautiful woods in the distance. I cross the room and enter the marble bathroom, which, while well appointed, has the unfortunate hand railings that start to bring me back to reality just as I hear murmuring in my room.

The husband and wife doctor team are waiting for me and greet me, once again, warmly. This is their facility and they are the experts I have put my trust in. They are the best. They divide their time between here and Sweden and have an otherworldly air that is comforting, which is just what this whole experience is all about. They ask me a few questions, smile and reassure me that all will be fine, and quietly leave the room as a new nurse enters. She asks me if I am hungry and tells me this will be the last time I may order anything to eat for awhile, and she hands me a menu. The menu consists of a list of many bouillons, juices, teas and gelatins (they would never refer to gelatin as Jello here). While I order a chicken bouillon and a lemon gelatin, she gets out what I can only describe as the most gorgeous hospital gown I have ever seen, if that is, indeed, possible.

I am feeling so drowsy as I undress, don the gown, wash my face and put out my toiletries in the bathroom. I walk back into the room and hear music emitting from various corners. The classical music is filling my head and not leaving room for much more as I sit on the bed. As if on cue, the nurse arrives, adjusts the bed in a sitting position, and basically tucks me in and tells me to relax…to relax. It seems only seconds later that my silver tray arrives with my meal that consists of the most wonderfully delicious food I have ever eaten in my life. No, I can think of nothing else other how good it tastes, feels, and satisfies and afterward how wonderful the sheets feel and the music sounds for never has anything felt so good. I do not even notice the nurse lowering my bed just a bit. Vaguely, I remember that this is the beginning and I will be in and out of sleep for the next twenty-four hours. I will be able to use the bathroom with assistance and even have a shower. But for now, it is time for a nap.

I am awake now and it is semi dark in my room. A nurse enters and from my brief look into the hall, I sense it is, indeed, night. She accompanies me into the bathroom and I feel alert enough to take a shower. Afterwards, she helps towel me off, put on a fresh gown and has me sit on a vanity chair where she blow-dries my hair to perfection. I am enjoying this but a guilt pang hits so I ask if the music can be made louder. It is Vilvaldi, La Mer. How did they know?

Tucked back into bed, and so very content, warm, and relaxed I start to fall back to sleep and barely notice the nurse ever so gently inserting an IV into my right hand. My last memory is holding onto an the IV pole while shuffling into the bathroom, apparently for the last time, with the strong arms of a nurse helping to hold me up. I know everything will be all right and that in two weeks I will be back at home so very well rested. A most comfortable break in a most comfortable life.

HEARING PROBLEM

by Shane Bugbee

I live in violence...I come from violence. I understand it well. It isn't the art, the book, the film or the speech that's the problem.

Never could a video game reproduce the violence I have in my head...no matter how hard they try.

If I could put the violence in my head to film, I bet it would make the most violent think twice.

And then, the mother I always wanted will reach out from behind the thrift store counter, she can feel my pain, and she's compelled to give me a warm touch and a kind word. She's all that stops me from killing every last one of you.

True free expression isn't always nice and peaceful…sometimes it's vile and even violent. The fact that 'the man' gives us a right to speech is the same fact that they are controlling your speech. Do you really think you have a right to total free expression? Of course speech and expression are controlled, if they weren't, the illusion of our society ceases to exist. Think about what rules the squirrel or crow follows. Think about the snake's expression. Rules and total expression are like oil and water, they don't go together.

The lack of total expression is the biggest perversion of our animal. It festers and produces pedophiles, and explains wildlife game hunters and bad facial hair.

Further restricting expression will only make things worse.

Unfortunate things happen. Random acts of violence happen. Funny thing is…it's usually this kind of violence that brings up this sort of discourse.

We live in a country where we are free to hate, if we want to, and for that matter, we're free to paint targets on the face of politicians, entertainers and whoever we want. You don't like that — you want nice pictures painted? Plant more flowers! The artist, the commentator, feed off of their view, what they see, how they feel. Same goes for people. If you want nice citizens, do more for them to feel nice, and ultimately be nice.

If it were true that violent films or video games produced, let's say, school shooters, there would be a lot more shooting going on. Violent video games sell in the millions, and millions and billions have been to violent films and have read violent books and yet, there haven't been millions of crazy incidents...quite the contrary...it seems that if you feed kids violent video games it soothes aggression and they become pudgy and pasty wage slaves.

Don't blame the message, it's not the words…it isn't the entertainment. It's the crazy. If it wasn't the book, film, music, words, art, expression, it would have been the color of the weatherman's tie, or the shoes the bus driver had on.

We have a hearing problem, not a free speech issue. We have a "NOT willing to understand the others issue," issue. It has zero to do with speech.

THE
TROUBLE
MAKER

Free hearing test at:

shanebugbee.com

Facebook Prizes

Silke Heyer: I've won! Be a winner too: participate in *Galerie Barnaby's Quizzes* on Facebook, or look out for coupons on www.galerie-barnaby.de *The Guard Of Dirty Laundry* wishes you luck!

Florence Charles: I am an artist, lyricist, poet, music arranger, and designer for fabric and wallpaper manufacturers. myspace.com/taintdesigns

Bambi Weavil: I love *ArtSync*. I love how a good poem makes me feel (tingly and mind blown, like *ArtSync*), and I want you to give, Laura Minor's music a listen now. bambiweavil.com

A.J. Tissian, producer, audio engineer, musician, teacher. Owner/operator of SonicWave Productions, Inc., a commercial recording studio located in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, NYC. sonicwavestudio.com

Catherine Brown is an all purpose designer + illustrator based in Fayetteville, NC. She enjoys her days by spending time with her husband and her two dogs, Yogi & Bam-Bam. blog.browncatherine.com

Musician, Bent Reed
facebook.com/pages/Bent-Reed/74919964500

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casemanager@researchparanormal.org

FROM THE ART©

SOMETIMES SERIOUS, SOMETIMES FUNNY, ALWAYS FROM THE ART

ALL ABOUT IRIS

BY JUNE ROLLINS

I didn't plan on falling in love with Iris.

It all started last summer, while looking through the White Flower Farm Catalog. I had never heard of reblooming iris before.

I remember the bearded iris in my grandmother's flower garden when I was little. In the spring, they were majestic, taller than me. I couldn't believe these iris in the catalog put on their show in the spring and then again in the fall. I had to have them.

Being the novice flower gardener, when they first arrived last September I was uncertain of their fleshy, segmented bodies and stiff, green crew cuts. Cautiously following the directions, which seemed way too simple. I laid them in the ground and sprinkled fertilizer around them like I was casting fairie dust.

What transpired next was actually, the hardest part.

Watching and waiting.

Watching and waiting.

And then watching and waiting some more.

But, this past spring, nine months after we first met, my iris had their first bloom! They were as majestic as I remembered as a child in shades of purple, peach, periwinkle, mauve and gold.

And proud parent that I was, I took well over 200 photos. I took photos in the morning; I took photos in the evening, in the sunshine and in the rain.

I know I'm not the first person to stick a camera in a flower's face, but that didn't matter. I had been taken in.

Before watercolor, my passion had been photography. A growing desire to paint from my photos is what led me to watercolor. Yet, even I had not planned on this overwhelming pull to paint these irises! I mean, what aspiring artist has not painted flowers?

But they had lured me in and whispered their secrets and I felt compelled to somehow express this elusive connection in my art. Maybe Greek mythology is true? Iris was believed to be the personification of the rainbow and messenger of the gods. Traveling with the speed of the wind she linked the gods to humanity.

All I know is I was experiencing an iris, as I never had before. Could I show you an iris like you had never seen one before in my paintings?

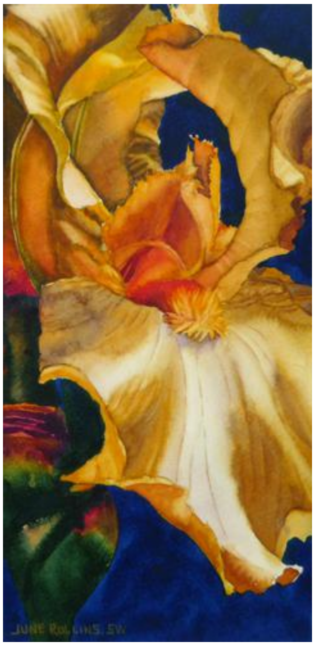
This isn't the first time I've been smitten with a subject.

I'll be enthralled with, you name it. But it doesn't last. After three or four renderings of apples or oceans, I'm ready to move on. The consummate "subject hopper."

Maybe, this time will be different.

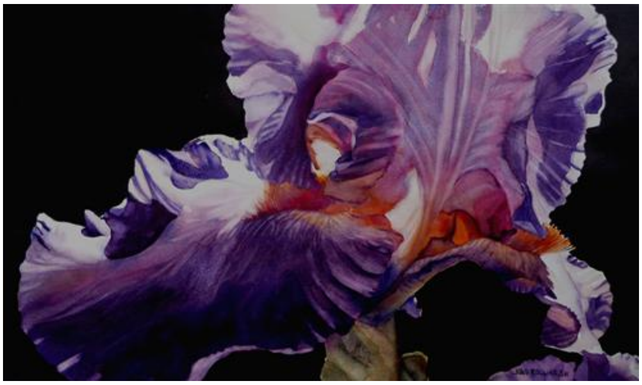
Yesterday, I signed Iris No. 11 in the All About Iris Series and I feel like I'm just beginning. You know, that excitement and enthusiasm that fuels all new endeavors? I've still got it. It's that and something more I can't put into words. A good problem for an artist to have.

If I could say it in words, there would be no reason to paint. –Edward Hopper



IRIS NO. 3
LIGHT WITHIN
WATERCOLOR, 12X21

IRIS NO. 9
CLOTHED IN MAJESTY AND LIGHT
WATERCOLOR, 5X10



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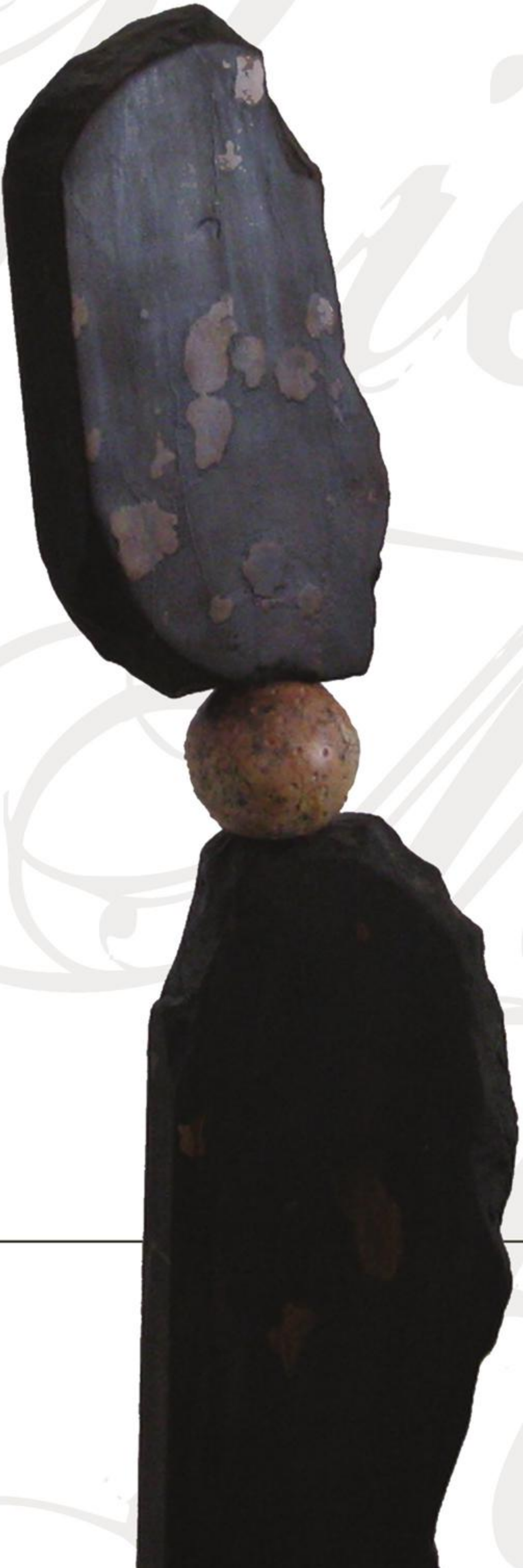

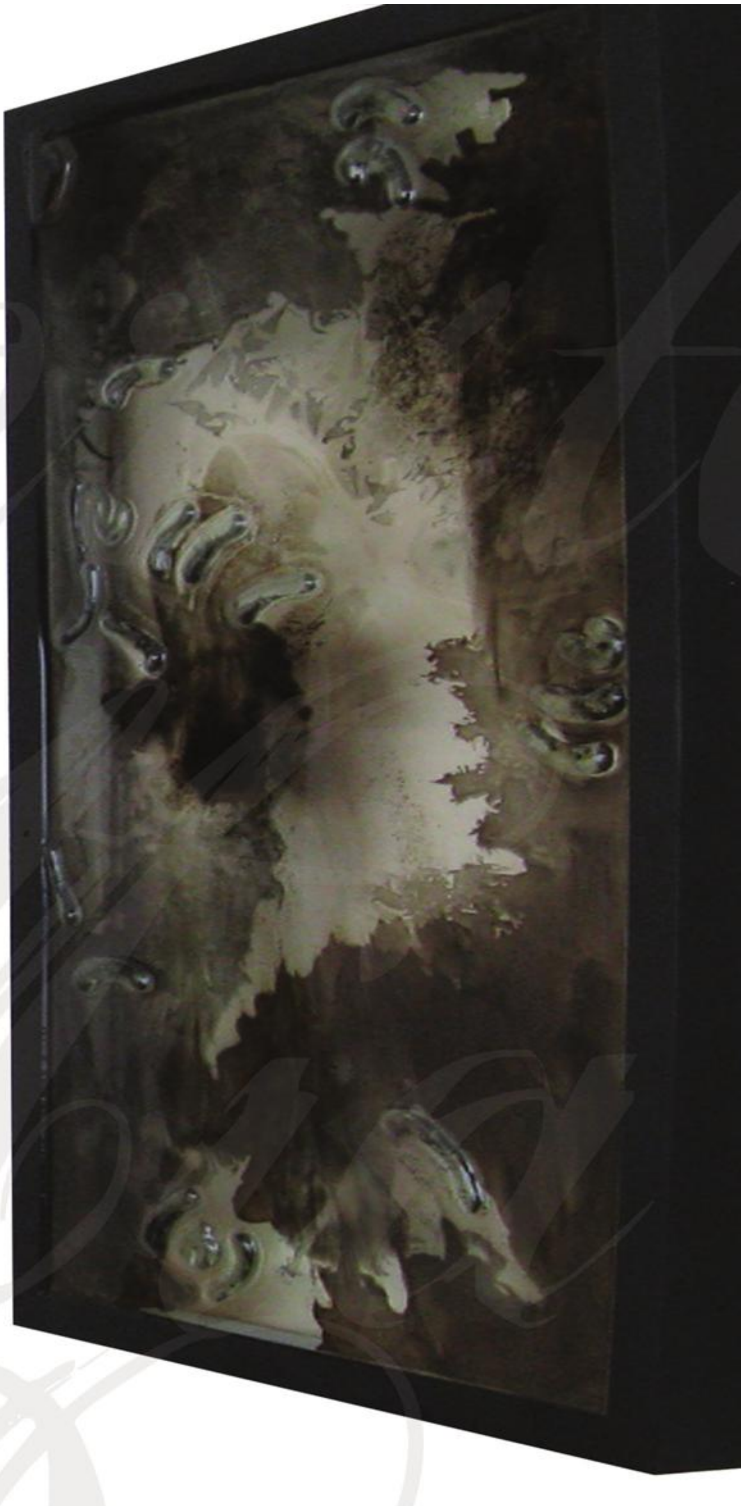

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Bambi Weavil

Poet, Publisher & Radio Personality

interviewed by Chrishelle Griffin

"I am the one who loves to make big things happen," says Bambi Weavil, CEO and President of Out Impact, an online publication geared towards gay men and women and their allies.Writer, poet, activist and humanitarian, Bambi works with various companies and non-profit organizations, in addition to hosting fund-raising events in Wilmington, North Carolina and New York City. An avid supporter of the arts, Bambi has hosted events such as the Impact Art Show and featured poet, Kim Addonizio, and *ArtSync's* own Christine Clemmons on OutImpact.com.

ArtSync: *What is a typical day in the life of Bambi Weavil, personal and proffesionally?*

Bambi: I'm involved in every bit of the Out Impact publication process — story assignments, the non-sexy SEO formatting, and the social media push. Since Out Impact Radio, I'm recording and planning shows constantly. If I'm not recording a show, I'm recording an interview. In-between a normal day, I'm trying to scout for new show concepts. I also participate as a co-host in a pro wrestling show on pw247radio.com on Wednesdays from 10 P.M. until midnight.

ArtSync: How did the birth of Out Impact come about?

Bambi: It is really interesting actually, because I didn't expect that this was going to be my life's work; I stumbled into the gay media world casually. I owe Tom of MySpace a beer if I ever see him, because I got a job at *Curve* Magazine, the largest lesbian publication in the United States, after applying to be a marketing and PR intern through the social network.

ArtSync: That's some start.

Bambi: I always give credit to *Curve*. Because of them, I was able to be in-touch with something I didn't expect about myself, and that was my gift of social media and marketing. As my time with *Curve* was ending, and we weren't able to come to terms of a renewed agreement, I decided to follow my heart and combine my two loves: non-profit/activism and gay media. I wanted to create something that the gay media world didn't have; to help lead and fill what I felt was a void. I wanted to create a gay online media organization for both gay men and women focused on lifestyle-based content, appealing to our allies and creating as much good as possible for various non-profits. Four years later, we have produced over nine events in North Carolina and New York City, reached over 350,000 hits with little-to-no formal advertising, and branched out into Out Impact Radio.

ArtSync: Very Cool. What was your inspiration behind the publication's name?

Bambi: I was tossing around so many names as I was birthing this organization, but I have to give a shout-out to my long-time friend, Cynthia Frawley. She has been there since the start of my gay media career, five years ago; we had good chemistry and clicked. She helped me come up with the name Out Impact because I knew my tag line was going to be 'Creating a positive impact in the gay community. Make yours.' So it stuck and stood out among our competitors; it "popped" as they say in the pro wrestling world. It said everything I wanted to say in two words.

ArtSync: As you know, here at ArtSync, we're all about the arts. How has Out Impact been involved with the art world?

Bambi: From a publication standpoint, since June 2007 when OutImpact.com launched online. From a personal standpoint, my entire life. It's always been my desire to cover the arts as much as possible, and I want to do so more and more as we grow.

Bambi Weavil

ArtSync: What kind of art?

Bambi: I try to feature diverse artists besides pop culture. For instance, we just interviewed one of my poetry heroes, Kim Addonizio which was a personal thrill to me. Kim was one of the biggest influences in my poetry at UNC-Wilmington.

ArtSync: That's awesome!

Bambi: In the past, we have done an Impact Art Show weekend in Wilmington, with artists who wanted their work featured at Out Wilmington's Community Center; it also raised money for both Out Impact and Out Wilmington. I must give props to my long-time friend and research coordinator, Shannon Smith, who was responsible for making that a success.

ArtSync: Is Out Impact making any current efforts to support the arts, and what impact do they plan to leave?

Bambi: I am always open to the arts community because I am one of you. I'd love to do more Impact Art Show type exhibits around the country. Generally speaking, I have a very open-door policy about collaboration and community. I truly believe when you have your heart in the right place, and you work hard with the right people, amazing things will get done. Right now I'm working on some behind-the-scenes campaigns, which is new ground for Out Impact. There is one specifically I want to have a direct connection to artists that will raise money for Out Impact and another non-profit that gives youth positive outlets instead of negative ones. This campaign has been in conception since the makings of my company, 4 years ago, and I finally found the right person to partner with to make it happen, so now it can. I'm still working out the details, so I can't talk too much about it yet, but it will give artists the chance to express themselves creatively, gain recognition and support a good cause. I'm very excited about this!

ArtSync: Where would you like for Out Impact to eventually end up?

Bambi: As a whole, I see us thriving in all mediums possible online. My publication has been read in countries I didn't know existed, which is humbling in itself, and I want to, at some point, host events overseas.

ArtSync: That's exciting!

Bambi: I don't believe in limitations, not in my life, or for our company. I want to be an organization that is relatable to our audience, and viewed as an organization that did it right and worked very hard to be the best in our industry.

ArtSync: What would you say has been a defining moment in your life?

Bambi: Oh wow, just one? That's really hard. The defining moment that unconsciously changed my life was reading that Ashley Judd article in *Marie Claire*. That changed my entire world in a way I didn't understand until I created Out Impact. I always related to Ashley's life story and creativity. I followed The Judd family closely in my childhood because that was the first act I heard that wasn't from my parents' rock collection. But if she had not been so open and passionate about her activism experiences, I'm not sure if I would have gotten on this path — my parents were not activists, they were too busy living the story of hard times instead. Always making sure we had a roof over our head, food on the table while struggling in the process, and sacrificing so much of their lives for all of us kids.

ArtSync: Minority communities tend to be less accepting of their LGBT members, especially those belonging to their families. How did your friends and family handle your "coming out?"

Bambi: I grew up in a very close family. I'm the oldest of three children and my little brother is severely disabled. As a result, my family has always pushed me hard to do the best I can in everything I do. I'm sure they had envisioned at some point, that I would one day get married and have children. I don't think they were counting on the fact that I'd be openly bisexual, running a gay media non-profit organization.

ArtSync: What was it like coming out?

Bambi: They didn't handle it well at first. There was a period of time where things were not okay, and we were not under the same roof as a result. Time is a healer and we were able to work on it.

ArtSync: What is your current relationship with them?

Bambi: Things are great and they are both supportive. I'm proud of them! At one of our events, The Original Village People Cowboy, Randy Jones (who I have proudly booked more than once for our bigger cruise events), dedicated a song to my parents for their wedding anniversary.

ArtSync: That's something they won't forget! What has been the biggest difference, if any, between your life pre and post coming out?

Bambi: Interesting question, I don't think I've ever been asked that. Pre-coming out, I was not sure where my life was going like most young adults who are in high school or college. I knew I was going to be a poet, potentially a teacher. I had a heart that needed to be around words in some capacity for the rest of my life, that I knew. Beyond that…no clue. I didn't expect to have my career so heavy in the activism world. Post coming out (which took years of really learning who I was, because coming out does not solve all of life's mysteries, it only means you embrace your attractions), I stepped into who I was: an activist, a writer, a difference maker, a game changer. You can't live your life based on being gay, bisexual or any other sexual label alone — you have to be more than that to be respected. I'm open about my sexuality, it's a big part of my career, but at the end of the day, most people view me as a person who they enjoy to be around, care about and happens to do meaningful work in the media and non-profit industries.

ArtSync: Life is full of ups and downs. How do you personally cope when things seem to be at their lowest?

Bambi: I've always been viewed as the "strong" one in my family, and in my circle of close friends. In a lot of ways, I'm a 'leader' in the activism and gay communities. Leaders are often expected unconsciously to not have "off" days. And though I know I'm both those things, it's a lot to live up to. So many people know Bambi the activist/gay media leader, very few know Bam, the lady who has a fairly private life, and just wants the people around her to be happy, encouraged and loved. When I'm really not sure how I'm going to get through the day, I do my best to push ahead with anything that is proactive in getting to the future that I desire, whether it is social media work or brainstorming. Sometimes I will confide in a handful of people who I respect and love a great deal, who know the sacrifices I make. Sometimes I will take myself in a "time out" and drink chai tea, and work on my poetry. Other times I will go outside and play with Mocca, who is probably the animal incarnation of my personality, for a mood change. I'm the kind of person who can't stay down for long, it's just not in me.

ArtSync: It's great that you can find ways to stay focused and postive. How has adversity you have faced in your personal life and/or due to your sexual orientation played a role in your ongoing efforts within your career?

Bambi: I'm considered a 'miracle baby' surviving entering the world at 1 lb. and 15 oz., so I have a lot of experience overcoming life's obstacles from breath #1. I believe in focusing, dreaming big and failure is not an option. I'm here to create, inspire, give back, and have fun doing it.

ArtSync: Well that pretty much covers it. Thank you Bambi for your honesty and your support.

Bambi: Anytime! •

Keep up with Out Impact & Out Impact Radio at:

outimpact.com

OR

bambiweavil.com

"On This Postcard"

by Bambi Weavil

The trees look like vaginas,
vulgar spit like off-pink
buds peaking
in the mid-morning of spring.

Is it raining where you are?
the humidity peels like damp paper
where did we leave off?
You speak in ellipses and I know the truth.

What we say when we don't say
sometimes this is the only comfort
you'll start your thoughts over
on a clean canvas, it's your processes
it's your turn.

Before you scratch a word out.

Take care of yourself.

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scarlettswebconsulting.com

“The Sharpest Cut of All”

by Jeffrey M Kellen

Oh, How I hate that word,

It stings, it burns, it cuts to my very bone,

It’s used to make me feel less and beneath you,

You throw it around like an empty bubble gum wrapper,

But to me it will still echo in my ears years from now:

“Retarded!”

However, I know something you don’t!

For I am built on forgiveness and strength,

And as you continue to wield that word (along with many others),

I have learned to move on, shielding myself from the very pain

You would have me suffer,

For I am bound to

No one

But

Myself!

I am courage! I am strength! I am Grace!

And now it is YOU who will learn from me,

The greatest lesson of all:

Compassion!

facebook.com/ArtistsandAutism

SCREW CANCER

A Benefit for Justin Flythe

by Adesola Ogunleye

A lot can be said about small cities; that they are plain and boring, that the people aren't anything special, or that you could pass by one in a blink of an eye, and not know you missed anything, that nothing amazing happens.

The same can't be said about Greenville, NC. September 17th and 18th were a great example of how extraordinary this place is. Those two days were marked by an event where artists, locals, teachers, businesses, friends, and complete strangers descended upon a local coffeehouse to celebrate the extraordinary life and triumph of Justin Flythe.

The event was held at the Tipsy Teapot where on each night five local bands played to the happy and enthusiastic crowd who came from as close as down the street to as far away as NY and GA. Justin's band, **Lonnie Walker**, was the last to play on that first night. It was the first time many people had seen him play since his fight against cancer began, and to the surprise of no one — the most emotional set of the night. With Justin's loving parents looking on, his friends in the crowd holding hands and screaming along with the lyrics, they knew all too well, tears flowed freely and love was in the air. No one could deny that something special was happening: their friend was doing something he loved again.

To accompany the music, artists from all over the country sent work to be auctioned off and sold during both nights to raise funds for the Flythe family. Things such as paintings, prints, drawings, ceramic work, photography were donated along with special gifts from businesses and friends, like a handmade wooden surf board, a low rider bicycle, and a **Smashing Pumpkins** box set.

There was so much amazing work from NC artists that was donated with ease, and no hesitation but out of the kindness and greatness of the heart. The biggest heart of them all belonged to Todd Cook. He spearheaded the event for his best friend, his brother. His big heart was contagious, and it got everyone pumped as the benefit went along to raise nearly $5,000 for Justin and his family.

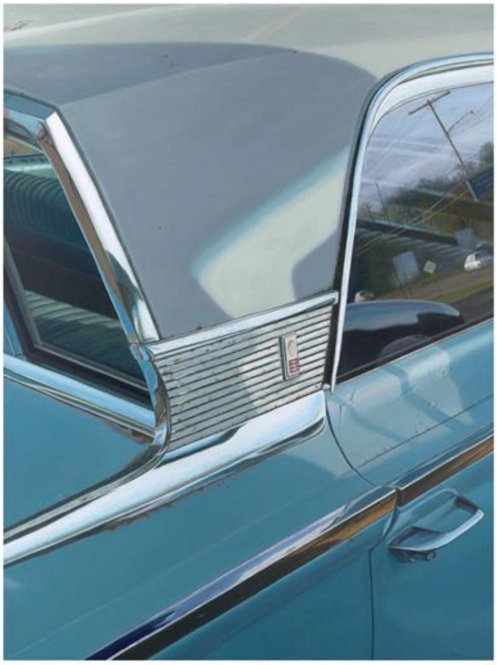
This two day event was something of pure love. Love for each other on an unconditional level. In a place where many people would not take an extra second to soak in the scenery, it was for a brief moment time stood still for the warmth of friends and family to celebrate, to dance, to enjoy, to sing, and to shout, "SCREW CANCER!"

For more information about Justin, his band; Lonnie Walker, and the SCREW CANCER page, please visit:

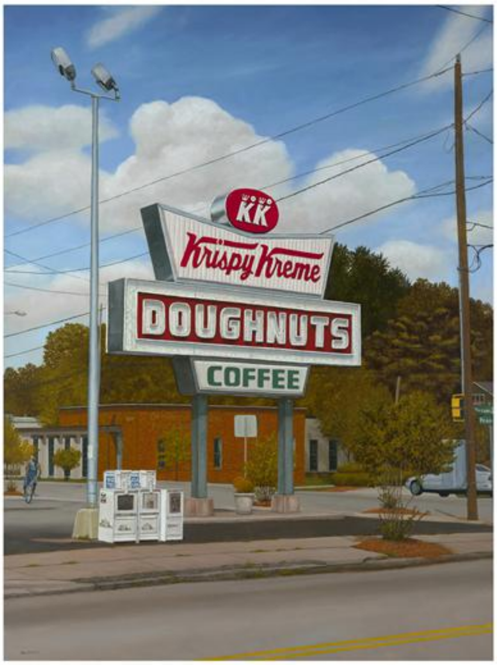
artsyncmag.com/pages/screwcancer.php

Justin Flythe performaning with his band, Lonnie Walker

A few of the many pieces donated for the benifit



Greenhouse
Archival pigment print on Hahnemuehle 300 gsm paper
Edition size: 300 signed & numbered + 5 artist's proofs
Image size: 24" x 18" - Trim size: 26-5/8″ x 20″
$159 unframed, $379 framed, COA included



Krispy Kreme, Raleigh NC
Archival pigment print on Hahnemuehle 300 gsm paper
Edition size: 300 signed & numbered + 5 artist's proofs
Image size: 24" x 18" - Trim size: 26-5/8″ x 20″
$159 unframed, $379 framed, COA included

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Introducing: Jaiden Frost

(ArtSync's newest intern)

Jaiden is an inspriring writer, film maker and musician. He's fresh, and when we say fresh, we don't necessarily mean NEW. The word BRAT comes to mind. He thinks big — has a wild imagination. He explores all his options, but not without considering right from wrong. Like him or not, he's a good kid trying to find his way and we're hoping to help foster the more sensitive side he keeps in his pocket. We may not agree with everything he says...ok, we definitely don't agree with everything he says, but we do believe in free speech and silliness.

Jaiden Frost
photo by Breonna La'Nay White

Frost's Rants

by Jaiden Frost

Most people view *writing* as an expression of one's soul, adeviation of true perception, or "hurpa derp, ima write sumthin kinda poetik and putz it in mah blog." Not that I have a problem with the latter of the three, I just feel writing is a little bit more than rhyming "my life sucks" and "just my luck," for making their significant other believe that they are "deep."

My perception of writing at this point in my life is one to be speculated. Writing is an overused craft that isn't as prestigious as it should be. It's becoming abused. One calls themselves a writer without realizing the dedication and sacrifices that are to be made, before said title is acquired.

I left home when I was 17 to chase this dream. I was kicked out of five different homes, slept under bridges, traveled the country, ate out of trash cans, lived in multiple party houses, attempted suicide multiple times, and almost institutionalized myself. The words that poured out of me were the very words that drove me towards insanity.

I carry a stuffed blue rabbit with me that I have had for as long as I can remember. His name is Davey, and it is very much a part of who I am and always will be. He is an amalgamation of my imagination. My imaginary friend, if you will, and my largest sacrifice. Every child eventually separates from that part of themselves in order to mature in the direction of adulthood. I accepted my fate and turned down the road to maturity.

There is a pain that only true writers feel. When the editor or another writer cuts one of your lines, scenes, sections or characters, a piece of you dies, even if they deserve to be cut. I have had my share of experience with this, and every time, it hurts exactly the same. Like a doctor losing a patient.

Writing isn't a hobby, a choice or something you do occasionally. It's a separate life, a perception. You can always pick a writer out from crowd of people. They have the gloss, the distant stare, that shows the depth of their very soul.

My eyes are nibs filled with ink, my fingers are pens. Without writing, I have no life, no purpose, and no reason to live.

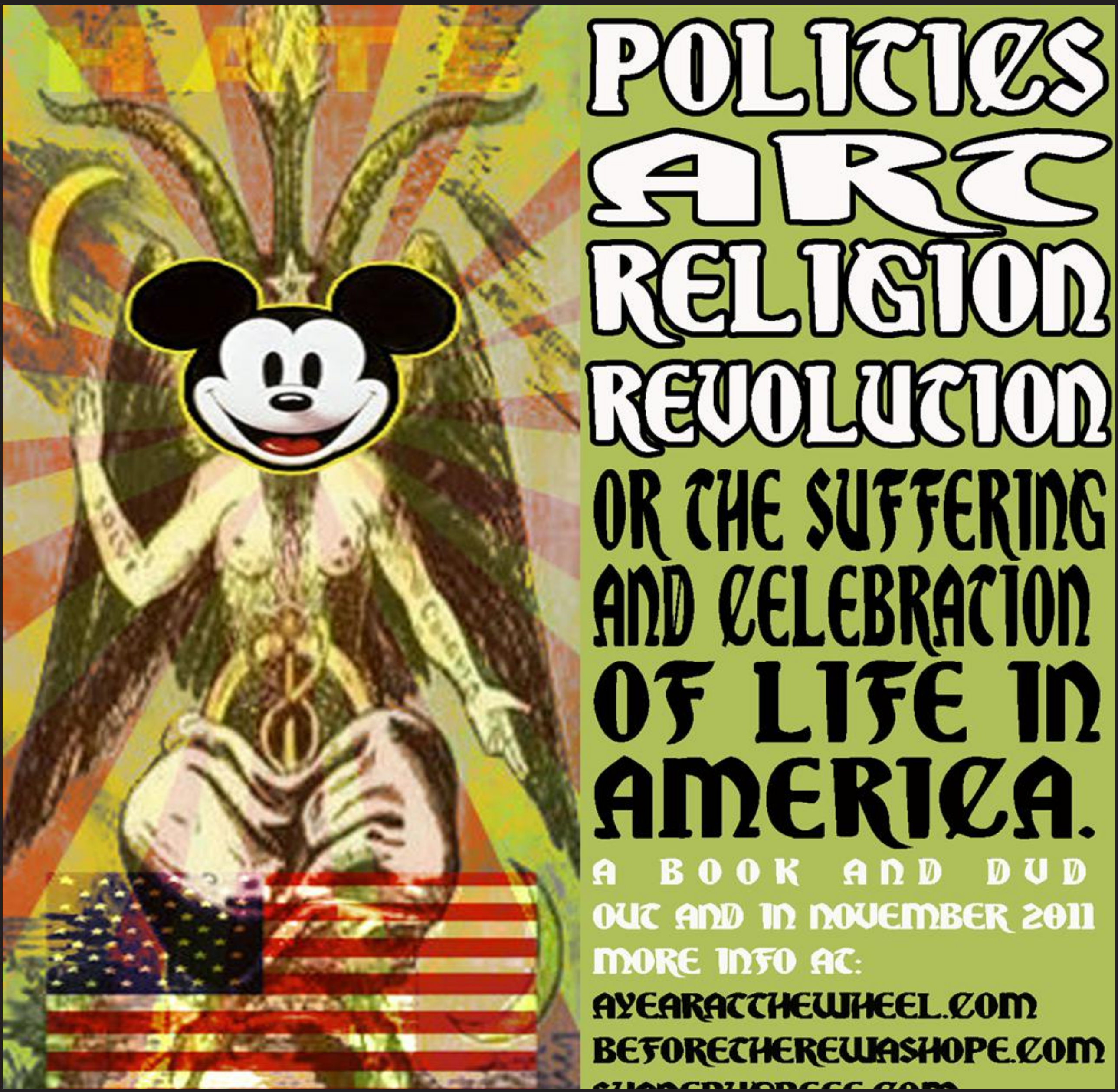
So, here I am, twenty years old, no stable income, no drivers license, no car, no health insurance, and no stable future. I walked out on my parents to chase my dream, only to learn that they were to be incarcerated in a matter of months. I sacrificed it all to chase down the privilege to call myself a writer. Was it worth it?

Yes.

So I ask you, what have you sacrificed?

Keep up with Jaiden on his facebook page at:

facebook.com/frostsrants



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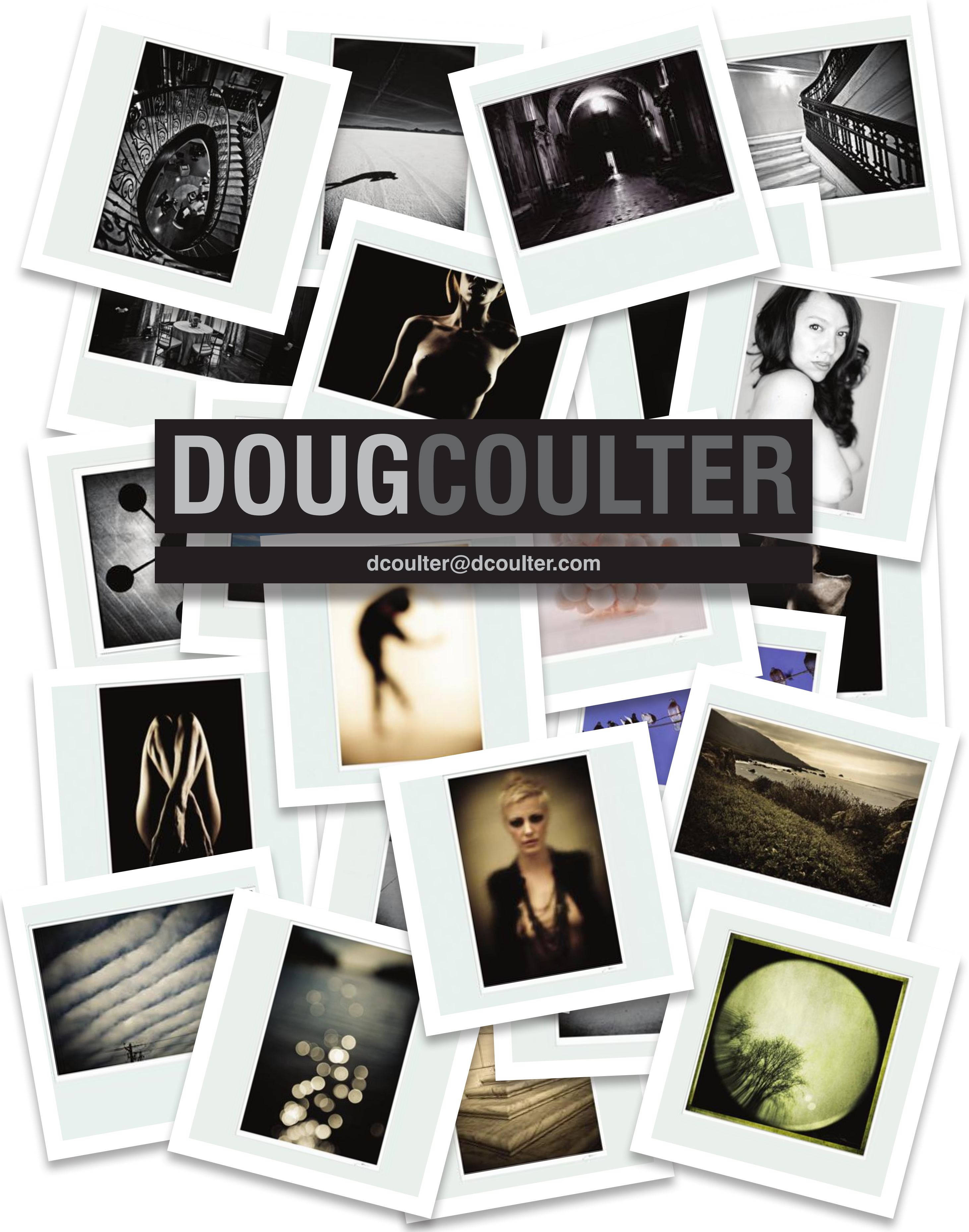

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